

River Voices

Developing Your Message

Effectively crafting a message to help, not hinder, your river work

by Kevin J. Coyle

When Harry Truman ran for the presidency, he did most of his campaigning from the back of a train. Television, the Internet, satellite video conferencing, instant faxes and CNN were all in the distant future. Even back then, though, Harry engaged in a process we now know as “message development.” He needed to appeal to a worried public in an era when labor laws were poor, people were getting back on track after World War II, and a well-to-do Republican establishment had floated the dashing and articulate Thomas Dewey as the widely accepted presidential candidate most likely to succeed. Harry was the underdog, that was his message, and he loved it.

The less-than-glamorous Truman went aggressively after his detractors by planting supporters in the crowds of each trainyard rally who — at the right time — would shout his campaign slogan, “Give `em hell Harry.” From there he would launch into his fiery underdog speech. But he did much more in the public opinion arena. For example, when he was confronted by opposing party legislation that would have scaled back the rights of workers, Harry called the bill the “Slave Labor Act,” and it stuck. Dewey lost. Harry had gotten his message across.

Today this field, known as message development, has become more sophisticated and more employed than ever imagined in Truman’s time. And, today, its tools are statistically valid attitude surveys, focus group discussions, polling of all forms, language analysis, slogan and image development and much more. But what does this world of politicians and posturing have to do with watershed conservation?

Think about this situation. You are in a public hearing on water pollution in western Kentucky. A young environmentalist is up protesting the fact that the town health officials are slow to respond to “run-off pollution” from “poultry waste” from the “new installations” along the river. If the “poultry operators” would adhere to their “on-site retention plans” under “Best Management Practices,” our young friend argues, there would be no need for frequent “boiled water alerts.”

“What did he say?” asks a senior citizen from the back of the hearing room. A town official translates. “He’s upset that the chicken farmers along the river are letting the chicken manure wash into our drinking water so that we have to boil it before our families drink it.” “Why didn’t he say so?” asks the senior. Why, indeed?

continued on page 4



River Voices



- 1 Developing Your Message
by Kevin J. Coyle
- 3 Letter from the President
by Phillip Wallin
- 8 Reaching Beyond the Choir: Notes from a
Washington State Message Development Project
by MCSSR in collaboration with Washington state
partnership
- 12 A Guide for Developing Your Message
by MCSSR in collaboration with Washington state
partnership
- 14 Creating Messages that Work on the Upper
Mississippi River
- 17 Surveys and Studies: Hydrorelicensing Campaign
and Drinking Water
- 18 Reaching Your Audience: Milwaukee Survey
used to Design Pollution Prevention Program
by Jonathan Simpson
- 20 References and Resources
- 24 River Network Partners and Supporters
- 23 Join the River Network Partnership
- 24 The 1996-97 River and Watershed Conservation
Directory

River Voices is a forum for information exchange among grassroots, state and regional river groups across the country. River Network welcomes your comments and suggestions. River Network grants permission and encourages sharing and reprinting of information from *River Voices*, unless the material is marked as copyrighted. Please credit River Network when you reprint articles and send us a copy.

Editors: Rita Haberman, Kathleen Krushas
Proofreaders: Kathy Luscher, David Wilkins
Design and Layout: To the Point Publications, Portland, OR



River Network
P.O. Box 8787
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 241-3506
Fax: (503) 241-9256
rivernet@igc.apc.org

Eastern Office
4000 Albemarle St. NW, Suite 303
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 364-2550
Fax: (202) 364-2520
rivernet2@aol.com

River Network is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to help people organize to protect and restore rivers and watersheds.

We support river and watershed advocates at the local, state and regional levels, help them build effective organizations, and promote our working together to build a nationwide movement for rivers and watersheds. River Network also acquires and conserves riverlands that are critical to the services that rivers perform for human communities: drinking water supply, floodplain management, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and open space.

River Network's program includes the following six strategic initiatives:

- Identify and support active **citizen watershed councils** — 400 by the year 2000, and 2,000 by 2020.
- Build a **River Source Center** to provide state-of-the art information to river and watershed advocates.
- Implement a **LEADERS Program** to support and organize strong **river councils** in 30 states or major river basins to work on statewide river issues and support local watershed councils.
- Assemble **five regional networks** of state river councils and local watershed councils through annual rallies to address common regional river issues.
- Conduct **Safe and Sustainable Watersheds Campaigns** to help watershed organizations increase public awareness of the value of rivers to their communities.
- **Working Rivers Campaign** to help the public acquire riverlands that serve vital functions to communities.

River Network staff

President: Phillip Wallin
Director of Partnership Programs: Don Elder
Program Managers: Pat Munoz, Rita Haberman
Riverlands Conservancy Director: Sue Doroff
Development Director: Maureen O'Neill
Administrator: Lindy Walsh
Office Manager: Jean Hamilla
Development Assistant: David Wilkins
Executive Assistant: Alison Cook
Interns: Kathy Luscher, Jon Stahl

From the President

You could say that the modern river protection movement was born in the early 1960s when the Sierra Club placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* to oppose dams in the Grand Canyon. The ad asked whether we should also flood the Sistine Chapel so tourists can get a better view of the ceiling. The dams were stopped and the Sierra Club's membership doubled.

That single image was far more powerful than reams of technical analysis and argumentation. It went to the heart of the issue: the sacredness of the Grand Canyon.

This issue of *River Voices* is about knowing your audience — who they are, what their lives are like, what matters to them — and respecting them enough to speak in terms that are meaningful to them. This doesn't require focus groups. It requires thought, imagination, creativity. It may even require speaking with people outside your usual circle (the local Rotary, for example).

We are blessed with an issue — river and watershed health — that bears on the life and well-being of the entire community. Everyone — everyone — cares about water. A 1994 survey for American Rivers by a major public relations firm showed that 95% of those interviewed felt that clean drinking water for our children was an urgent national priority, the highest rating for any issue the firm had ever looked at. The survey found there was no meaningful difference between urban and rural attitudes when it came to water pollution.

All we have to do is open our eyes to this amazing commonality, that everyone is concerned about the quality of the water that they and their children drink. Let's make the connection between the watershed and the water-tap — make it clearly and simply, over and over and over again.

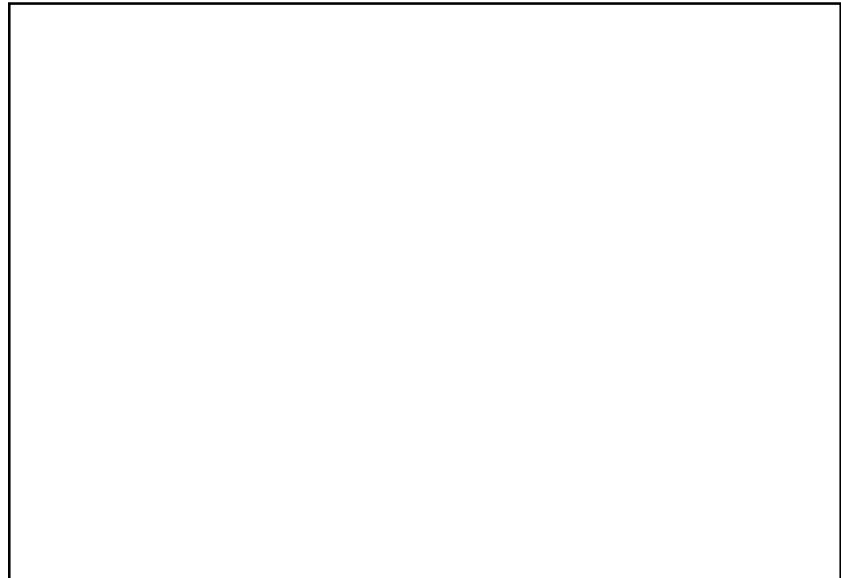
Our thanks to Kevin Coyle for an excellent lead article, and to others throughout the country for contributing to this issue on "message." The next issue of *River Voices* will be a companion to this one, exploring how to create materials for carrying your message to the community.

I'm pleased to announce that Don Elder has taken up his post as Director of Partnership Programs for River Network. Don was founder and long-time Executive Director for the Cahaba River Society, based in Birmingham, Alabama. His mission now is to implement our five-year campaign, Watershed 2000, throughout the country. In addition to caring deeply about rivers and watersheds, Don brings a Southern perspective to our work that helps to round out our team.

Sincerely,



Phillip Wallin
President



River Network staff: front row (l to r) David Wilkins, Lindy Walsh, Kathy Luscher. Second row: Jon Stahl, Rita Haberman, Pat Munoz, Phil Wallin, Maureen O'Neill. Top row: Jeff Muse, Jean Hamilla, Don Elder and Sue Doroff. Not pictured: Alison Cook.

© photo by Linda Kliewer

**Let's make
the
connection
between the
watershed
and the
water-tap —
make it
clearly and
simply, over
and over
and over
again.**

Developing Your Message

continued from page 1

The answer lies within the tendency those of us who work in a technical area have to use jargon — and worse, we get so used to our rarefied terminology that we assume everyone speaks it. So speaking in real language is where formal message development begins.

Step 1: You must be able to explain the problem to your mom

I believe that most river conservation people have lost the ability to speak to everyday people. I realized this at an American Rivers (where I worked for 8 years) board meeting when, after an hour-long discussion of salmon restoration, an experienced board member raised his hand to ask what “anadromous” meant. But what about all those people who are too shy to raise their hands? Do we blissfully proceed to use such terms “non-point,” “riparian,” “instream” or “aquatic” without recognition that they are pretty much opaque to the public?

When was the last time you started a discussion on non-point pollution or watersheds with a reference to rain? — i.e. describing the problem as rain water flowing across the land and washing chemicals, soil, and animal waste into the river? When was the last time you described livestock degradation of the riparian area as cows chewing up or tromping all over streamside vegetation?

There are no magic answers to this language question but there is a lot of common sense. We must almost never assume that people know what we’re talking about. My mother is a teacher. One day while I was describing River Network’s efforts to help organize the “watershed” movement, she stopped me and asked me to explain “watershed.” “I am the majority in this country,” she pointed out, “I am who you have to get through to.” I started over, beginning with rainfall. And, that is when I adopted the most incontrovertible rule of message development — to be successful, you must be able to explain to your mom what you are doing.

Step 2: It’s about people

Most river conservationists I know work to conserve the natural values of rivers. That is their main focus. This makes perfect sense to me because rivers are at the core of most of



Mom

our major ecosystems. This was the reasoning we used for many years to develop media coverage and programs at American Rivers. But, we also wondered why our membership was still relatively small when compared to some other national organizations. How could such a sound *raison d’être* be ignored by Americans?

An American Rivers board member, Dick Hopple, is an executive with a major advertising firm that has access to market research companies. We asked him to help us answer this question. Dick described our work as focusing a bit too much on the “riverness” of rivers — their natural qualities — and he had a hunch we needed more “peopleness” in our program. We had a survey done under the auspices of his firm that found some startling facts about peoples’ views of river conservation.

First, the natural biological values of rivers were a top priority for only about one-third of the population whereas 90 percent were concerned with river pollution. Second, when rivers — major providers of drinking water to about 75 percent of the American public — were described as our “freshwater supply,” concern levels jumped higher because people saw that healthy rivers meant healthful drinking water and healthy kids. It can be very hard for river conservation organizations to make the mental shift from nature preservation to a real concern for people such as human health. In the case of drinking water, both foci involve watershed management but with the drinking water issue, unprecedented political support is to be had. At American Rivers, we began to use the catch phrase “watershed to water tap” as a banner for this issue.

When was the last time you described livestock degradation of the riparian area as cows chewing up or tromping all over streamside vegetation?

Step 3: Look for the “Bob” response

There are many other “people” issues in our work. Drinking water is only one. I have a friend I use as a barometer for what issues are likely to resonate with the public. Let’s call him Bob. He is a horse breeder in Kentucky and a conservative Republican. But he usually supports river conservation wholeheartedly due to the “Bob response.”

Talk to Bob about the Corps of Engineers channelizing a river in Florida and then getting even more money to put it back in its natural meanders, and he goes nuts. Explain that a Canadian mining company can take \$500 million in gold off U.S. federal lands and pay no royalties while leaving

behind a toxic dump, and he is ready to write Congress. I think every river conservationist needs a Bob. He gets mad over such issues as:

- a) dumb government,
- b) tax waste,
- c) fat cats getting favors,
- d) bodily health threats caused by ignorance,
- e) threats to property values,
- f) and especially threats to children by passing our mistakes on to them.

Step 4: Read the research, don't reinvent it!

Matt MacWilliams, a principal with the political and public relations firm of MacWilliams Cosgrove et al., has conducted a number of successful campaigns — political and issue — by developing messages that resonate with the public. He helped American Rivers, for example, figure out that hydropower dams killing fish was of less concern to the public than the fact the utilities were charging people money for electricity by using the public's rivers. Most people did not know the rivers belonged to the public. (see p. 17)

Matt sees a key aspect of success as coming from his hunger to read existing surveys and polling information. He

points out the main thing he notices about his clients is how little they use the data that is already out there and how frequently they want to start their own studies.

This issue of *River Voices* contains information on some of these surveys, two of which come from my organization, the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF). Make use of these surveys. Also, potential funders will be more inclined to help you if you show how you are taking advantage of existing data and adjusting it to your own needs.

Step 5: Avoid the "wrong target" trap

Sometimes river conservationists can get a little fuzzy about who they are trying to influence with their message. Any campaigner will tell you to be very specific about who you want to reach. Most often it is a lack of public support that stymies your efforts and that can be a real trap. I have seen lobbying and press strategies that fail because they were aimed too sharply at legislators and did not take into account that elected officials wait to hear from constituents before they take action.

It is important in your message development efforts to be clear about the difference between elected officials who do

continued on page 6

Words, Phrases, and Themes

The words, phrases, and themes that your group uses to describe your issues are extremely important.

Advertisers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars developing messages they want to send consumers. Similarly, White House advisors consciously choose the words which best describe the President's position. The terms "kinder, gentler America," "peacekeeping missiles," and "safety net" are examples of controversial positions made neutral or softer by specific terms.

When determining how to position your issues in the media, a major decision will be: are you for it or against it?

Examples: are you for clean air or against pollution? Are you for burning the flag or protecting the Bill of Rights?

Polling data can help you decide how to best frame an issue in the media.

Once you have brainstormed the best possible coverage and have developed a set of press lines, draft an op-ed piece for your local media in which your words are not edited or taken out of context. By putting the words, phrases and themes to paper, you can usually improve the quality of the product tremendously. Test out the "lines" on some friends or a small group of impartial participants. Advertisers pay up to \$10,000 for each "focus group." Informally, conduct your own focus groups with neighbors, college students, or community activists.

When you are comfortable with the lines, share them with other organizations who

are working on the same issues. The trick will be to get as many people as possible to agree on similar press lines which can then be repeated over and over. Remember, if you are doing an interview with media that will be edited to a few quotes, repeat the main theme or press line throughout the interview as often as possible. Make the main point you are trying to get across to the reporter from the beginning, and then return to that point again and again.

Remember

Keep the message simple. Target your audiences. Repeat, Repeat, Repeat.

Reprinted from *Strategic Media* published by Benton Foundation and Center for Strategic Communications (see page 20)

Developing Your Message

continued from page 5

not “want” to conserve rivers and those who would if they felt the public wanted them to. You must learn to talk to the people who can give you what you want and that is most often the public. That is why messages around your issues must be clearly stated, non-technical and have solid public appeal.

Step 6: Use a message distillation method

A. Distinguish “Topic” from “Issue.”

River conservationists I have worked with tend to identify a topic — runoff pollution, riparian habitat, instream flow — and treat it as though it were an issue. Issues are actionable, topics are not. This means that when you are talking to the press and are discussing a topic (water quality) the reporter may fail to grasp the import.

It can be even worse when you are discussing a public policy topic such as hydroelectric power relicensing (a government action) and you try to cast it as a resource issue. At American Rivers, one potential funder called having read a report on our hydropower relicensing campaign and asked me to explain what the resource issues were. After I had explained what the dams were doing to water quality and fish and what could be done to improve the situation, he was satisfied. We had failed to frame the issue as anything more than the “relicensing issue” and that meant that the message was lost.

B. Frame your issue for action — give people hope.

If “runoff pollution” is the topic, the issue is what steps can be taken to keep it from destroying our water quality. If riparian loss is the topic, the issue is whether feasible actions can be taken to stop the loss and conserve, even restore the areas.

These are examples of issues we hope to have addressed, and there are many more. Matt MacWilliams is quick to point out that people are tired of too much bad news, and that the average American believes that we should be able to find common sense solutions to most of our problems. That is why — to get a clear message out, to get good press coverage and to persuade decision makers — you should frame the issues so people can see hopeful actions.

C. Decide on the message and back it up with a “catch phrase” or slogan.

Let’s say the topic is non-point pollution from poultry waste. The issue is whether actions can be taken to stop the pollution of the city’s drinking water. The message is that

Awareness and Attitudes about America’s Rivers

- ◆ The concern with America’s rivers appears driven by the near universal concern (94%) with drinking water.
- ◆ 95% “agree completely/somewhat agree” that leaving our children with a safe water supply should be a national priority.
- ◆ Americans express concern about river pollution (90%).
- ◆ Over 4 in 5 Americans claim awareness of water pollution.
- ◆ When asked specifically about the environmental safety of America’s rivers, most claim to be knowledgeable, with only a very small proportion claiming significant knowledge.
- ◆ While most Americans express at least some familiarity with the impact of river pollution, particularly on fish, less than 1 in 4 claim to be “very familiar” with any consequences.
- ◆ Nevertheless, Americans express a sense that this is a current issue, with 2 in 3 claiming to have heard or read about river pollution in the last 6 months.
- ◆ Television (86%) is the major source of this awareness, followed by newspapers (64%).
- ◆ Americans most frequently blame the chemical industry for river pollution.
- ◆ Understanding of specific consequences of river pollution appear vague. ➤

Reprinted from *A Study of the Public’s Awareness and Attitudes Towards Environmental Issues Related to America’s Rivers*. Presented to American Rivers by DMB&B, April 13, 1994

farmers are carelessly threatening our community’s drinking water and they expect us to pay \$x million to clean up their mess. This would make Bob mad. You can sometimes seal the effectiveness of the message by also pointing out that it would not cost much to keep the manure from washing into the river. Just build a retention pond or whatever.

The catch phrase gets people remembering the message and the issue. Here we could try something like “from the hen house floor to what you pour.” Let’s save our drinking water.

Most well-funded groups will hire a “focus group” specialist to help them develop a message that resonates with the public. This is great if you can afford it. If not you may have to do your best with the collective wisdom of your board, your staff, your Bob and (don’t forget) your mom.

D. A picture is worth a thousand technical terms.

If you get the words right, it really helps to get a picture too. Sometimes that will be all you need. For years, environmentalists pointed out how terrible drift nets were for dolphins. Their words fell on mostly deaf ears. And then one courageous soul stowed away on a fishing boat and videoed the dolphins being killed through entanglement in the nets. This one video did more to change fishing methods than all the legal appeals and protests that preceded it. Face it. We live in an electronic world and we work with the natural environment — a visual medium.

But, how many activists use photos, maps, videos and charts to make their case? Few do in my experience. They fail to grasp the public’s attention because they rely too much on the spoken and written word. The problem is, society has gone real visual since Truman’s day.

Step 7: Your message must get through the background noise — Repetition

Assume for a minute that you have done it all right. You have a people-oriented issue about which something can be done. You have the right message, slogans, pictures, the works. But still the word is not getting out. That is where basic media and promotional activity is needed. (Refer to *River Voices* fall 1994 on working with the media.) But from a message development standpoint there is still one thing you must do, and that is keep delivering the message over and over again. It is repetition that helps get the message across. It is a basic rule of advertising and it is a basic rule of message development.

In conclusion

When it all comes together, message development is the river conservationist’s most powerful tool. The Mississippi flood of 1993 was a tragic event that was being described in the press as a natural disaster that could not have been avoided. True, it was the flood to end all floods but there was a cause that was not being addressed. When river conservationists finally pointed out that the levees had cut the river

“The river needs room to roam” is the message and that message was clearly told in photos in Oregon’s newspapers during the floods of ‘96.

Photo by Kevin Coulton

off from its natural flood plain and that billions of taxpayer dollars were being spent encouraging development in flood prone areas, the debate shifted. And the media was flooded with coverage of the issue for three weeks. From the standpoint of public awareness, that debate did more for flood plain management in a short period of time than years of study about the problems had done up to that point.

The message was that government had done some dumb things in engineering the river and people were paying the cost in lost homes, farms, jobs and more. That year, the MacNeal Leher Report’s year-end commentary of the press noted that the coverage of the Mississippi Flood and the role that government had played in making the damage worse was among the best and clearest news coverage of the year. It also helped get a \$1 billion relocation program through Congress.

Although your river topics may not be as catastrophic as the Great Midwestern Floods of ‘93, it is important to know how powerful message development is, and that it can help your organization achieve its river and watershed conservation goals. 🐟

Kevin Coyle is president of the National Environmental Education Training Foundation, and formerly served as vice president of River Network and president of American Rivers.

Reaching Beyond the Choir

A Washington state partnership shares its wisdom

The following article is derived from notes developed by the communications firm of MCSSR in collaboration with a partnership of the following Washington state organizations: People for Puget Sound, Washington Citizen's for Resource Conservation, Washington Environmental Council, The Mountaineers, the Sierra Club Foundation, and Washington Environmental Alliance for Voter Education.

The project utilizes opinion research to re-examine how environmental organizations communicate with the public. The partnership aims to develop more effective language to clearly communicate environmental objectives to the broader public. While some of the following is applicable nationally, many of the recommendations were based upon research conducted in Washington and can be applied confidently only in that state.

Changing Perceptions of "Environmentalists" and the Environmental Movement

After 25 years of progress, environmentalists now find themselves on the defensive and environmental programs under attack. In Washington state, many people who place a high value on protecting the environment, describe environmentalists as people who do not listen, do not take a balanced approach, and are not "like us, middle class people." Where environmentalists were once perceived as concerned citizens trying to protect their communities and quality of life, they are now considered "political players."

Feelings About Environmental Regulations

Type of Regulation	Gone too far	About right	Not far enough	Don't know
Environmental Laws	48%	19%	28%	5%
Water Pollution	14	28	53	5
Hazardous Waste	16	28	49	7
Air Pollution	20	34	42	4
Wildlife Protection	30	37	28	5
Growth Management	27	27	29	18
Zoning	35	32	20	13
Endangered Species	41	31	23	5

Although this is not a ringing endorsement, take heart. Many people — especially women — follow up their initial view with a more tempered picture. In this view, environmentalists are seen as knowledgeable. As one woman said, "Sometimes they may go too far, but most of them know what they are talking about." Environmentalists were also viewed as an important counterbalance to the influence of money and power on the system. Although the public may not always agree with environmentalists, at least we are fighting for something that is important. "I think they are out there protecting us," said another focus group participant.

Back to Basics

Our challenge is to identify ways to translate public opinion for environmental protection into a reinvigorated support for environmental progress. To start, we must accurately reframe the environmental debate and reposition ourselves with the American public. We must reiterate what the goals of environmentalism have always been—to care for people's home, health, and natural heritage.

Polling and Opinion Research on Environmental and Social Issues

We must never assume that because we are working for the public good, people will flock to our position. The mood of the nation reflects a lack of confidence and distrust in institutions and leaders, and that has come to include environmentalists. We need to understand public opinion, stay on message, and watch our language to refurbish our image.

• **Importance of Language, Example 1:** The Times Mirror Magazines National Environmental Survey, 1995. Questions asked:

The only way to preserve wildlife, natural areas and natural resources is to prevent development and restrict most other human activity in these areas.

Agree...28%

We can protect and conserve wildlife, natural areas and natural resources by managing these resources, while also using them for the benefit of our economy and the public.

Agree...70%

Short-term messages

Rules of the 'Message Development' Road



The environmental community often fails to understand how our language is perceived by the public. We can work with public opinion by paying closer attention to how we communicate.

1. *Don't defend government.* Rather, describe the type of government you want — “Hey, I want a government that works, not one that wastes. I want a government that is open and accountable for its actions, not one where decisions are made for the benefit of a few insiders. A government that enforces equally the laws that are already on the books.” The public has a populist distrust of big business and corporations who are seen as money driven, greedy, and not accountable to people. However, they also distrust government and politicians for the same reason. We should be on the side of government when it is accountable and responsible, and on the side of the people when government is out of touch, arrogant, and irresponsible.

2. Use *language that describes our goals, such as conserve, balance, accountability* and common sense.

3. *When possible, frame the debate in terms of “non-boutique” issues.* Instead of endangered species, talk about wildlife protection, which is broader and more inclusive; if talking about ecosystem protection, follow with a specific example to which people can relate, like water quality safeguards that protect Puget Sound.

4. *Remind people that we're on their side.* Describe how environmental protection relates to health, home, heritage, and economics.

5. *Define clearly the winners and the losers.* Who pays? Who benefits from this?

6. *Remember, cynicism is at an all time high.* People do not trust most messengers; never assume that you are trusted.

7. *Support our friends:* it's not easy being green.

8. *Look at the language of anti-environmentalists carefully and use what makes sense.* Why should they have control over wise use, local control and property rights? Stripped of their political baggage, don't we believe in these concepts?

It is no coincidence that these terms resonate with people: for example “local control” appeals to the increasing value of self-reliance. ➔

• **Importance of Language, Example 2:** The Times Mirror Magazines National Environmental Survey, 1995
Please indicate where you strongly agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement:

I think we can find a balance that will allow us to enjoy progress and protect the environment.

Strongly & Mostly Agree...91%

• **Feelings About Environmental Regulations**

When describing environmental regulations, clearly stating environmental objectives, such as clean water or wildlife protection can make a tremendous difference in people's opinions. How an issue directly affects an individual's life and family will influence their feelings and response. (see chart left on page 8)

continued on page 10

Reaching Beyond the Choir...

continued from page 9

- Feelings About the Federal Government

Despite an optimistic economic picture, public opinion about the effectiveness of government is extremely sour. The public says the federal government: Wastes our money (93%); helps large corporations and rich people, not average people (81%); has too much influence in our lives (61%); promotes policies that undermine basic American values (58%).

Terms and Phrases to Use and Avoid

Certain terms, regularly used by the spokespeople within the environmental community, are not particularly well-known or effective when addressing citizens beyond “the choir.” To communicate with the general public, we must either be inclusive, and describe the terms we use, or choose not to use such terminology. This does not mean changing one’s policy or position. It simply means communicating in terms that people relate to and understand.

For example, take “biodiversity.” A typical reaction was this response from a man in a midwest focus group: “sounds like a government program, and I’m not ready for it.” A term that expresses a similar concept and actually resonates with the public is “ecosystem.” It is believed that people respond better to ecosystem because of the educational system teachings over the past two decades.

Instead of using “regulations,” describe what they actually are: “safeguards,” “standards,” “protections.”

“Growth management” can be couched in terms of “local control.” After all, what does the law do but give local citizens—not developers and their political buddies—the ability to plan for a community’s future.

If talking about “riparian,” describe it as the stream or river banks. Most people don’t know the term watershed— “we don’t use those anymore” — so more technical terms will likely lose your public.

And finally, despite the compelling urge to use it, “corporate welfare” means nothing to most Americans. Like “jumbo shrimp” or “military intelligence,” this term is an oxymoron to most people. It is elitist language that sets us apart from the general public.

Short-term Messages

- Defining for Ourselves (and Others) Who We Are
Rather than be trapped by labels (e.g. ‘environmentalist’), it is often effective to describe what values we stand for. We also should be careful of the language we use to define our opposition.

- Rules of the ‘Message Development’ Road (see page 9)

Long-term Message Development

- Creating a New Agenda

Values People Want to Live By

When asked about the values that make communities work, Washington state focus group respondents talk sincerely about a fundamental ethic of respect, responsibility, and accountability that starts with the family and radiates outward to neighborhood and community. Here are examples of how they articulate these values:

Respect

“You don’t tromp on anyone;” “do unto others;” “looking out for other people;” “what’s good for the most;” “the golden rule.”

Responsibility

“take responsibility for your actions;” “with rights go responsibilities;” “I am responsible for my area. When you are in kindergarten, you learn this is your area and you take care of it.”

Accountability

“If you foul your nest, you have to clean it up;” “People must be held accountable.”

Our challenge is to identify ways to translate public opinion for environmental protection into a reinvigorated support for environmental progress. To start, we must accurately reframe the environmental debate and reposition ourselves with the American public.

When people spoke of large institutions that intersect their lives — big corporations and government—it becomes painfully clear that people are frustrated and alienated by

what they see as an increasing lack of accountability and responsibility in their communities.

Furthering environmental protection can be accomplished by framing issues in terms of respect, responsibility, and accountability. Citizens respond to holding business, government, and individuals accountable if they fail to live up to their responsibilities, and do not respect the environment and other people.

National Consensus Exists to Protect Environment

When asked “why do we/should we protect the environment?” people talk about three key areas: health and safety; home and quality of their lives/their way of life; and their heritage, protection of the natural world for themselves and their children.

1. Health

For many people the bottom line on environmental issues is health. Whatever the issue — pollution, toxics, pesticides, food safety, or water quality — there is an underlying fear that the declining environmental quality threatens the safety and health of our families and communities.

Messages on health will help reconnect environmentalism to its mainstream base. For example: “We can’t let special interests roll back progress on environmental safeguards like the Clean Water Act that protect our health.” And “We should hold big business accountable when they ignore environmental safeguards and put pollution in Puget Sound that can harm children and pregnant women.”



We must reiterate what the goals of environmentalism have always been—to care for people’s home, health, and natural heritage.

2. Home (Quality of life)

People intuitively understand that the quality of the environment affects their quality of life just as social and economic issues do. They need safe streets and good jobs, but they also want clean air, good drinking water, and parks. To many, these environmental and social issues are connected, but too often, they say, environmentalists think only about the environment, even before they consider real people’s lives.

Messages should acknowledge that the environment is important because it enhances the quality of people’s lives. These people-centered messages can help reconnect the public to environmental concerns, and connect environmental action to local communities.

3. Heritage

Many people have a sense of responsibility to the future and believe it is important to make environmental choices that do not hurt future generations. They also have a strong sense of loss and sadness, that we are losing important parts of our environmental heritage that can never be regained.

Mainstream Washingtonians will respond to messages about protecting and conserving our environmental heritage in responsible ways so that our children and children’s children will be able to enjoy them as we have. In the Northwest, these messages have particular resonance because of people’s awareness of the impact of clearcutting and the value they place on the great natural beauty of our state. ➤

For more information, contact Josh Baldi with the Washington Environmental Council at (206) 622-8103.

A Guide for Development

Step 1:

Define the issue(s), or your organization in common language.

Goal: Demonstrate clearly to people that you are on their side.

Ask and Answer:

- ◆ How does it hurt people or help them?
- ◆ How does it do so regionally and locally?
- ◆ How will solving the problem or the work of your organization help people locally?
- ◆ How will it help them in their everyday lives?
- ◆ What are examples of people who have been helped or hurt?

As you define the problem or your organization's effects on people, remember to cast it in terms of our four primary themes:

- ◆ **Health** – We clean up the environment to ensure the health of our families, our friends, and our neighbors.
- ◆ **Home and Quality of Life** – We clean up the environment to protect our quality of life/way of life/our neighborhoods, and our community.
- ◆ **Heritage** – We protect our environment for our children and posterity. We have a responsibility to pass our environmental and natural heritage on to our children.
- ◆ **Economics** – We protect the environment and conserve our natural resources to benefit our economy and the public.



Step 2:

Explain the values that drive you and your organization to work on this issue.

Goal: Show people that your values and their values are one and the same. You are one of them.

• Refer to mutually shared values when framing your issues:

Respect

How does your position show respect for the environment, people, community, neighborhoods, our heritage, our children's future?

Rights and responsibilities

We all enjoy certain rights, but with these rights come basic responsibilities to each other, our neighbors, and our community.

Can your position be defined in terms of rights and responsibilities?

Accountability

Government, business and individuals should all be held accountable for their actions. If anyone fails to live up to their responsibilities to the community, they should be held accountable.

Does the issue lend itself to a discussion of accountability? And can you talk about accountability without lecturing or appearing to be "holier than thou?"

Right to Know

This is an extremely powerful tool when framed in terms of people having a right to know so that they can make their own decision about issues that affect their lives.

Can you frame the issue in terms of people's right to know?

Protecting the future for our children

This is very powerful with women. How will this issue affect our children and their future?

ping Your Message

Step 3:

Reveal your stake or your organization's stake in the issue. Again, cast it in the terms defined above.

Goal: Define your stake in this issue, why you care, and your credentials.

Step 4:

If possible, define a workable solution to the problem that shows flexibility and balance, and empowers folks to help.

Goal: Offer a workable solution or a process that leads to a solution.

By offering a positive solution or process to reach a solution, you say to people: "We can solve our problems. I am not playing politics with this issue. I care about actually resolving it, not making political points.

- The solution should be framed in terms of the values outlined in Step 2.

Step 5:

Clearly identify our opponents and, in some cases, their motivations.

Goal: Be careful to maintain a reasonable and balanced tone when identifying opponents.

In many cases, the name of the opponent and a normative description of what they plan to do (for example, "rolling back 25 years of environmental legislation") is damning enough. But, the more rhetoric we use, the more political we seem, and the less likely we will be believed by people. ❖

by MCSSR in collaboration with the Washington state partnership

The above template was based on research conducted in Washington state. While it provides a process that can be useful for developing messages, you should be cautioned that public opinion may vary by region. Incorporating relevant research is highly advisable to verify or refine the above recommendations.

For more information, contact Josh Baldi with the Washington Environmental Council at (206) 622-8103.

Creating Messages that Work on the Upper Mississippi River

Last year the McKnight Foundation conducted a message development project for river groups in the Upper Midwest, the northern one-third of the Mississippi basin and an area with many McKnight Foundation grantees (refer to map on page 16). The purpose of the project was to enhance the effectiveness of river conservation groups in the region by helping them develop and deliver messages that resonate with people in their communities. McKnight retained the public relations firm, MacWilliams, Cosgrove, Snider, Smith, and Robinson.

The project was designed to answer the following questions:

- ◆ What are public attitudes toward the Mississippi and the environment in the upper Midwest?
- ◆ What activities and programs for raising awareness and commitment to protecting the Mississippi are useful, what works less well and what is missing from current efforts?
- ◆ Who are the best audiences for messages about protecting the Mississippi?
- ◆ What kinds of future programs and projects will deliver these messages to target audiences with the most impact?

Involving a few different steps, the project's first steps were designed to get an understanding of the current situation by: reviewing materials and messages currently used by river groups, assessing how the media covers their work and river issues, and conducting focus groups on the these currently used messages.

The next steps were designed to create new messages that work in the Upper Mississippi region by conducting polls on test messages and again on refined test messages. The final step was to develop a set of recommendations for river groups.

FINDINGS

The following are some of the key findings from the study. It is very important to keep in mind these findings are specific to the Upper Mississippi region.

Public Attitudes

Research found that area residents saw the Mississippi as both a natural and economic resource. They believe the Mississippi has been damaged by human use, and are pessimistic about its future. The primary concerns with the river are pollution and quality of drinking water, for which most people blame industry first.

Many people admit they don't know much about the river but they wish they knew more, which presents a great opportunity for more education about the Mississippi.

Best Audiences

Targeting your outreach efforts can save time, money and resources. For this project target audiences are identified as: people most concerned about and interested in the river already; people most receptive to messages about protecting the river; people more likely to change their behavior or take action to protect the environment.

The best audiences for Mississippi River issues are:

- Urban residents in the Twin Cities and Quad Cities, especially younger residents with college education,
- college educated and younger women,
- outdoor enthusiasts, primarily blue collar men.

Messages that Work: Why Protect the Upper Mississippi River

1. Public Health/Drinking Water

Water quality in the Mississippi is bad and getting worse. It threatens wildlife and natural habitat and ultimately all our public health.

People believe pollution is the problem with the river, and they agree that the most important reason to clean up the Mississippi is to ensure safe drinking water.

Fears that the river pollution may affect public health and drinking water elevate concerns about the river. Public health and drinking water are the most effective way to break through the apathy about protecting the river.

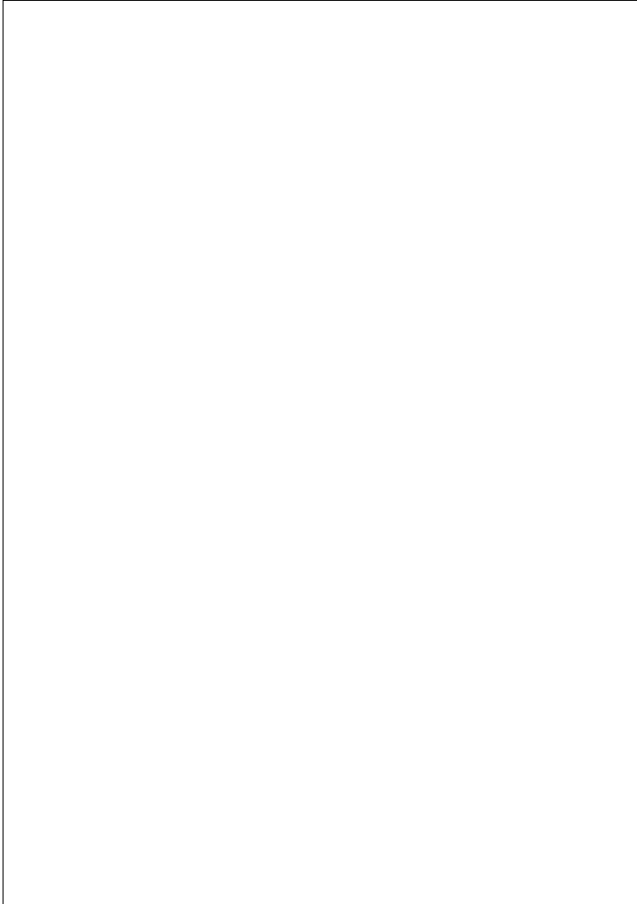
Talking about protecting drinking water is a strong strategy with target audiences (Twin Cities and Quad Cities, especially women, college educated people and outdoor enthusiasts). It is also compelling with older residents and non-college educated people.

2. Stewardship

We must be responsible stewards of the Mississippi and the lakes and streams that feed it. We all share the responsibility to protect this unique resource for our children and future generations.

People feel a responsibility to protect the environment for our enjoyment today and for future generations. Pollution and poor water quality hurt people's ability to enjoy the river today for recreation, and it is wrong to pass on a polluted river to our children and grandchildren.

Stewardship is convincing to 89% of people in the Upper Mississippi. It has strong appeal with all groups, cutting across regions, generations, gender and party lines.



The bluffs along the Mississippi, a priority area for Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

3. Recreation and Tourism

The Mississippi enhances all of our lives through its natural beauty and recreational value. Thousands of people use the river in their leisure time for boating, fishing and hiking and we must protect the river to make sure that recreational use can continue for all of us.

This strategy connects water quality and stewardship to the river. It is a positive message and tells people that they can use and enjoy the river today.

A recreation strategy expands appeal to outdoor enthusiasts and younger men.

Again it is important to note that these are messages that work in the Upper Mississippi, and they may not work elsewhere. It is also important to understand that messages that work are grounded in what people know and value, which is not necessarily square with the facts.

How to Frame Messages

It's not enough to just use appropriate messages, you must also describe them in a context that makes people feel included, hopeful, and interested in the work of your organization. The following are some suggestions: *continued on page 16*

VOICES FROM THE GRASSROOTS

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, a member-supported nonprofit organization with 4,000 members, dedicated to protecting, preserving and enhancing Iowa's natural resources, founded in 1979.

Anita O'Gara, Communications Director

How will the study impact your work?

"Now we have a better basis for message development. Before we just sort of winged it; there was no formal research, just what past experience taught us."

"We knew about what language is acceptable and which words send up red flags, but the study confirmed how important language is. It helped us hone in on the words we want to focus on. For example, 'stewardship' is an ethical word that Iowans along the Upper Mississippi really respond to favorably. 'Restore' also is taken well. On the other hand 'preserve' means hands off. Then there are words like 'development' that can be understood in many different ways. They need to be explained more, 'uncontrolled development' or 'haphazard development,' we might speak against, so people don't think we are against all development."

Were there any big surprises in the study?

"It's always an eye opener that people know as little as they do about rivers and natural resources. There needs to be more education on the basics. Sometimes you are so close to projects that you don't explain what you mean. We always need to be explicit."

"Another surprise was that NE Iowans do not view the Mississippi Bluffs as a national treasure, and that's definitely a goal we want to promote."

"We were also surprised about the receptivity of women to the message. In a rural audience especially, it is too easy to ignore the women. Messages for farmers and landowners are traditionally formed with men in mind."

How will you reach a key audience – women – in your work?

"Through one-on-one contact, through the photos and quotes we will use in our magazine and other materials."

Do have any advice for other river groups working on message development?

"Just the basic reminders: messages need to be simple and direct. You need to know your audience, not just think you know your audience. You should be careful of words that can be taken wrong. Eliminate certain alarmist words from your vocabulary. Keep a list by your desk, a handful of good words that you want to use in your work." ◀

continued from page 15

Responsibility and Accountability as Touchstones

- All of us should live up to our responsibility to protect the Mississippi for future generations.
- Those who pollute or otherwise damage the river should be held accountable.
- While we are all responsible, those that have done the most damage bear the most responsibility for cleaning it up.

Local Approaches and Community Partnerships

- Local approaches are more cooperative and less confrontational. They are more practical and less political. They are smaller and closer to the ground and less of a one size fits all big government approach.
- Local approaches are good, but when it comes to pollution, water quality and safe drinking water we need a regional or nationwide approach. Government must be part of the solution because we need government to establish standards and hold people and companies accountable.

Use the Language of Balance and Collaboration

- We favor a balanced approach, not black and white choices.
- We provide solutions as well as a diagnosis of the problem. We may draw attention to pollution, but we also offer balanced, reasonable solutions.
- We are not alarmists with “chicken little” gloom and doom scenarios. We believe in a balanced approach that considers the economic as well as the environmental value of the Mississippi.

Future Programs and Projects

For groups interested in message development, the following is a checklist for evaluating ideas, projects and organizational effectiveness:

Does the organization have a people-centered mindset?

Does the project focus on appropriate target audiences or does it preach to the converted?

Is the project action-oriented rather than process oriented? Does it tell individuals what they can do, and is it realistic about what people will take on?

Does the project purpose include strategies that will move people from apathy to concern, connection and ultimately action?

Does the group's communications identify solutions as well as problems?

Do they get their messages out in places where target audiences can be reached? 🐟

VOICES FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Friends of the Minnesota Valley (FMV) was organized in response to increasing development in the Minnesota River Valley. FMV is largely responsible for establishment of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Recreation Area in 1976. FMV now runs the MN Valley Heritage Registry program for private landowners.

Ann Haines, Executive Director

How will the study impact your work?

“The study reconfirmed the work we are doing with our Registry program. We are already using many terms and themes that resonate well with our audience: ‘stewardship,’ ‘legacy,’ ‘future generations,’ and ‘responsibility.’ We will continue to work on publicizing the river valley which has been coined as the Twin Cities ‘best kept secret.’ Also, we need to better identify the groups of people we need to target and how to reach them. Friends of the Minnesota Valley is committed to ongoing work in message development.”

Were there any big surprises in the study?

“First, that professional, younger age women are such a large target audience.”

“The number of people who consider themselves environmentalists. That was a very positive finding.”

“That the public sees the biggest polluter of the Minnesota River as industry, even though agriculture is the largest threat to the river and their drinking water source.”

“That stewardship is such a large concern outside the religious community.”

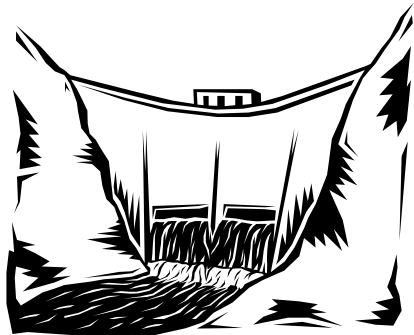
Do you have any advice for other river groups working on message development?

“Message development is very important work. Environmental groups usually do not think like businesses, but like any business, we must sell our ideas. Communications is one of the biggest challenges. How you phrase things is so critical. You must work hard to target your audience.”

Public events help keep your river in the news. Work within your community to help citizens think of themselves as belonging to a ‘river community.’” 🐟

The above portrays the approximate boundaries of the Mississippi study area.

Insightful Surveys and Studies



Hydro Relicensing Campaign

Sometimes a study is just what you need to point your message in the right direction. American Rivers did just that in fall 1992 in preparation for their hydro relicensing campaign. They hired Mellman & Lazarus to conduct focus groups in Maine and Wisconsin to find out the public's attitudes toward hydroelectric dam relicensing.

The most significant finding of focus groups in Wisconsin and Maine was enlisting support would be a major challenge. Hydroelectric power is a complex topic, and the little knowledge the public had about dams was generally positive.

So instead of pouring a tremendous amount of energy into educating the general public, American Rivers and others in the Hydropower Reform Coalition fine tuned their message about current shortcomings with dams and the unbalanced approach dams offer river management. Two key findings they focused on are the following:

- Rivers are public resources and utilities have used them at virtually no cost. Most people believe utilities should give something back to the environment and have a responsibility to limit impacts.
- More than for any other criticism, participants were alarmed by the fact that licenses are good for 30-50 years. Many were baffled by this long period of time, and could not conceive why it is not shorter. This is especially true due to examples from their own lives and from other regulatory licenses that are much shorter in duration. When respondents heard this information, they appeared to have a better understanding of why these dams might be operating in a way that is not consistent with a balanced use of the river.

Armed with this information, they planned their campaign strategy and members of the Hydropower Reform Coalition have successfully intervened in hundreds of relicensings across the United States. ➤

"Attitudes Toward Hydroelectric Dam Relicensing," conducted by Mellman & Lazarus, Inc. for American Rivers in December 1992.

Drinking Water Studies

Keeping in mind Americans' concern with rivers appears driven by a near universal concern with drinking water, the following may prove helpful.

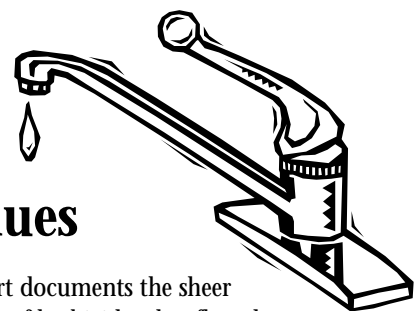
In the drink

"No one should have to worry or even wonder about what's in a glass of water when they draw it from their tap," said Kenneth Cook, president of the Environmental Work Group in the May 1995 study "In The Drink."

The 30-page study gives an in-depth analysis of data collected from the EPA's Federal Reporting Data System (FRDS) for the years 1993 through 1994. "These data, which contain only reported violations of federal standards, provide a snapshot of drinking water quality in the United States during this two year period."

The report examines only health standard violations (monitoring and other violations are not included) in community waters systems. Research showed that well over one quarter (16,272 out of 57,000) of all community drinking water systems in the United States reported at least one violation of a federal health standard during the two-year period.

For information on this study, see references page 20. ➤



Tap water blues

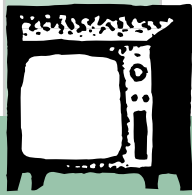
This report documents the sheer amounts of herbicides that flow down the Mississippi after runoff and the effects these herbicides have on people after they are ingested through drinking water.

According to the study, more than 3.5 million people in 120 cities and towns face cancer risks more than 10 times the federal cancer risk benchmark, based on average annual exposure to these herbicides in drinking water. Read the study for all the details. ➤

"Tap Water Blues: Herbicides in Drinking Water," October 1994, by the Environmental Working Group.

Reaching Your Audience: Milwaukee Survey Used to Design Pollution Prevention Program

by Jonathan Simpson, Tetra Tech, Inc. Fairfax, VA



“Television news reports, newspaper articles, and a community newsletter delivered to the home were cited as the best ways to get people to take notice of water resource issues.”

The public needs to be educated about nonpoint source pollution!” cries the Urban Stormwater Manager. “Videos are hot — Let’s do a video, debut it at a public meeting, and then put a dozen copies in the library for people to check out.”

How effective is this approach? — Not very, according to a recent survey of over 3,000 residents in the lower Milwaukee River watershed. Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Environmental Resources Center report that people have a willingness to learn and make personal lifestyle changes to help the water environment, but they prefer a passive approach to the education process (Nowak et al., 1990).

Television news reports, newspaper articles, and a community newsletter delivered to the home were cited as the best ways to get people to take notice of water resource issues. (Figure 37.1)

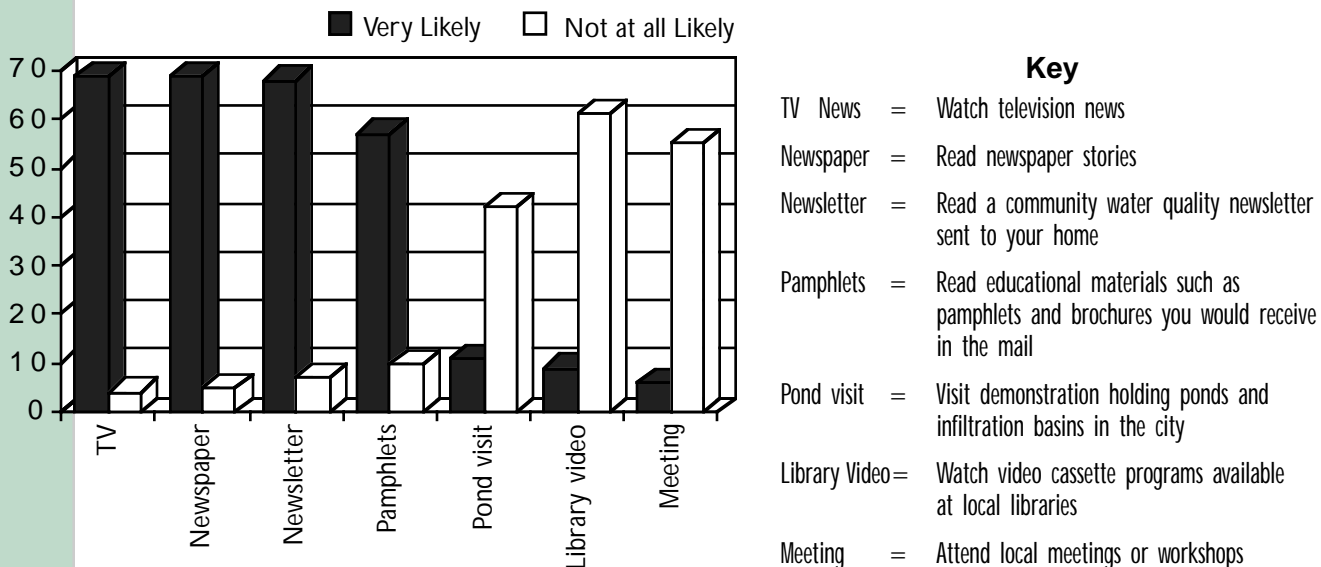
Traditionally, citizens have been considered the weak link in nonpoint source pollution prevention programs. In spite of intensive education efforts, some unenlightened residents continue to exacerbate local water quality problems by overusing chemical fertilizers, improperly dumping yard wastes, exposing soil to

erosion, and allowing litter and pet wastes to move off their property.

Even more striking is the public’s ignorance about new advances in stormwater management that can result in better local stream and wetland protection. Consequently, local opportunities to install innovative BMPs or stormwater retrofits routinely pass by planning and zoning boards without much public comment or involvement. Is it that people are uninterested?...uncaring?...Or are they just not properly plugged into the pollution prevent process?

“The underlying goal of the Milwaukee River Program survey,” says Carolyn Johnson, Urban Water Quality Educator for University of Wisconsin-Extension, “was to directly reach out to citizens to learn their views about water quality, the recreational use of area waters, and potential involvement in surface water protection.” In 1989 a multi-page questionnaire was mailed to 5,500 residents in the lower Milwaukee River Basin to find answers. The pool was randomly selected from state driver’s license files maintained by the Department of Transportation. A well-designed system of pre- and post-survey contact resulted in a response rate of 55%.

Figure 37.1:
Comparative effectiveness of different media in engaging the public in Milwaukee, WI



Recipients were asked to respond to questions in seven topic areas. Some of the significant results are discussed below.

1. Perception of water quality

Virtually all the local waters were rated poor to fair by respondents. Sixty percent of the people from the City of Milwaukee rated the quality of the Milwaukee River as poor. The primary reason for the negative attitude was that the water appeared "dirty".

2. Use of lakes and streams

The perception of poor water quality, coupled with limited knowledge of recreational opportunities in the basin, limits the number of people that use local water bodies for recreation. Instead, people seek their water recreation opportunities elsewhere. For example, 47% of the respondents from Milwaukee indicated that they fish, but only 1-2% fish in local waters other than the Milwaukee River, and only 5% use the Milwaukee River.

3. Knowledge of causes of water quality problems

Most urban residents (55%) believe that point sources such as sewage treatment outfalls and industrial discharges were the major cause of water quality problems in the watershed. Nonpoint source pollution sources such as construction sites and street runoff were not recognized as important.

4. Acceptance of stormwater practices

The design and function of grassed swales, stormwater ponds, and infiltration basins were briefly described in survey form. Approximately 40 to 50% of survey participants thought that these BMPs should be required in new development. Only 10 to 25% opposed the requirement of these practices. The rest were unsure.

5. Preferred format for receiving water education

Of particular interest were questions regarding preferences on how the pollution prevention message should be delivered. Only 6% of the respondents said they were "very likely" to attend meetings or workshops on the subject. About 55% said they were "not at all likely" to attend. The information sources rated "most interesting" were the television news and a community water quality newsletter delivered to the home.

6. Willingness to take action to prevent pollution

Over 90% of the respondents indicated that they are willing, or already do, a number of things to protect water quality. These include taking used automotive oil to a recycling center, separating household hazardous wastes

and recyclable material from other trash, limiting use of chemical fertilizers and weedkillers to one application per year, and supporting an ordinance requiring dog owners to clean up their dog's waste.

7. Willingness to pay for improvement efforts

More than half of the respondents said they were willing to pay \$50 or more per household per year for programs to protect and restore local lakes and streams within a time frame of 8 to 10 years. Interestingly, they would be willing to pay even more (about \$75 per household per year) for more aggressive programs that would produce results in one to two years.

Much time, effort, and money is currently being invested in the production and distribution of watershed education materials to the public. Are these resources being spent wisely? The "cart is before the horse" if knowledge and behaviors of the targeted citizens are not assessed at an early stage.

The Environmental Resources Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Milwaukee River Basin Citizen Advisory Committee, provided the foundation necessary for developing a successful pollution prevention campaign in the lower Milwaukee River basin. Watershed practitioners are now using the results for community outreach efforts. Elected officials have been enthusiastic about voter support for cleanup efforts. Most important, citizen opinions have been included upfront in water resource protection and restoration efforts.

Planning an effective outlet for the public educational message is critical. This survey provides evidence that traditional media used by agencies (meetings, brochures, fact sheets) are rejected by a large majority of respondents. Instead, people prefer the comfort and (perceived?) legitimacy of the mass media. Given this knowledge, watershed practitioners should work to increase access and use of local television, newspapers, magazines, and radio when establishing citizen outreach campaigns. ◀

References

Nowak, P.J., J.B. Petchenik, D.M. Carman and E.B. Nelson. 1990. Water Quality in the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area: The Citizens' Perspective. Report submitted to the WI Dept. of Nat. Res. and the Milwaukee River Basin Citizen Advisory Comm.

Reprinted with permission from Watershed Protection Techniques, Fall 1994, by Center for Watershed Protection, (301) 589-1890.

STUDIES

"The Environmental Two Step: Looking Back, Moving Forward," May 1995. Part of the series of the Times Mirror Magazines National Environmental Forum, which serves two purposes: first, it chronicles Americans' attitudes and opinions on the environment, to identify developing trends and views of environmentalism; and second, it focuses on the groups in the population which Times Mirror Magazine serves — namely sportsmen and women. To order send \$25 to:
NEETF
734 15th Street N.W., Suite 420
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 628-8200

"Environmental Attitudes and Behavior of American Youth With an Emphasis on Youth from Disadvantaged Areas," conducted for NEETF in December 1994. The study looks at youth's views on the environment. Free from NEETF (see above).

"Attitudes Toward Hydroelectric Dam Relicensing," conducted by Mellman & Lazarus, Inc. for American Rivers in December 1992. Contact Margaret Bowman at American Rivers, (202) 547-6900.

"Upper Mississippi Message Development Project" for McKnight Foundation by MacWilliams, Cosgrove, Snider, Smith, and Robinson, February 1996. A summary is available only to river conservation groups in the Upper Midwest. Contact:

McKnight Foundation
600 TCF Tower
121 S. 8th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 333-4220

"In the Drink," by the Environmental Working Group, May 1995. Looks at drinking water statistics from across the country and measures them against national safeguards.

To order a copy send \$13 (Washington D.C. residents add sales tax) to:
Environmental Working Group
1718 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 667-6982 or e-mail at
info@ewg.org
All EWG reports are on the World Wide Web (except Tap Water Blues below) at <http://www.ewg.org>

"Tap Water Blues: Herbicides in Drinking Water," October 1994, by the Environmental Working Group. Analyzes the extent of exposure and health risks associated with herbicides in drinking water. To order send \$43 to EWG (see information above under "In the Drink").

TRAININGS

Message Development Training
By communicating more effectively, we can save and restore our battered planet — including our rivers and watersheds. Richard Beamish, veteran activist and author of *Getting the Word Out in the Fight to Save the Earth* (see below), will be conducting a five-day training session for environmental leaders at the Vermont Law School, South Royalton, VT, July 29-August 3, 1996. Participants will learn how to build support for their cause; get results through powerful newsletters, action alerts, brochures, advertisements and other printed communications;

influence public opinion and public policy by working productively with the news media; and raise major funds. Tuition is \$500. For information call (802) 453-6448.

PUBLICATIONS

Getting the Word Out in the Fight to Save the Earth, by Richard Beamish. Published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, 181 pages. Excellent reference that explains basic message development and how to incorporate principals into your organizational activities. Beamish knows the topic thoroughly, and most importantly, integrates his knowledge of message development into the basic bread and butter activities of environmental nonprofit groups. Available through a special offer for \$15 (sells for \$25 at bookstores) through NRDC at the
Clean Water Network
1350 New York Ave., NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 624-9357
cleanwater@igc.apc.org
or contact the publisher, John Hopkins Press, directly at (800) 537-5487

Strategic Media: Designing a Public Interest Campaign, published by Benton Foundation and Center for Strategic Communications, send \$10 to:
Benton Foundation
634 Eye Street, NW, 12 Floor
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 638-5770

Guerrilla P.R.: How You Can Wage an Effective Publicity Campaign...without Going Broke, by Michael Levine. Published by HarperBusiness books, 1993, 229 pages. The author's goal is to get readers to "think like a publicist." Complete description on how to work with the media.



The New Publicity Kit: A Complete Guide for Entrepreneurs, Small Businesses and Nonprofit Agencies, by Jeanette Smith. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995, 331 pages. A how-to guide on all aspects of media coverage, including expert tips and tricks of the trade on how to use a multitude of free or low-cost publicity opportunities.

POLLS

Times Mirror Center For The People & The Press

Times Mirror
Donald S. Kellermann, Director
1875 Eke Street, NW, Suite 1110
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 293-3126
Free. Times Mirror sponsors periodic nationwide surveys of the electorate to help voters, politicians and journalists to better understand and communicate political issues.

The New York Times Poll

Michael Kagay, Director
News Surveys
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10036
(212) 556-3888
Free. A packet of information will be sent on a monthly or bi-monthly basis

which includes: a "Dear Pollwatcher" cover letter summarizing the findings of the polls conducted over the past month by the NYT; a copy of the NYT articles that reported on them; and the actual survey information. NYT/CBS News national polls are included as well as statewide and local polls by the NYT.

The Gallup Report Monthly

P.O. Box 628
Princeton, NJ 08542
(609) 924-9600
Non-profit rate: \$55 per year. Call or write for subscription. Published monthly by The Gallup Poll since 1965. Contains articles from the weekly Gallup Poll News Service, reprinted in full, poll questions and results, and the detailed demographic tables in an easy-to-read format.

NBC News Poll Results

NBC News
Margaret Ann Campbell
Room 1426E
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112
(212) 664-2593
Free. Call or write for subscription. NBC will send their survey approximately 2 weeks after the poll is conducted. Includes: a cover letter summarizing the findings of the survey and the actual survey information (i.e.

date poll was conducted, sample size, questions, and response data results). NBC News/ *Wall Street Journal* national polls are included.

USA Today/CNN Poll

USA Today and/or CNN do not release a report to the public. Therefore, the best way to obtain USA Today/CNN polling data is to clip it from the *USA Today* newspaper on the day the article reporting the findings appears.

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research

John M. Barry
Montieth Bldg., Room 421
University of Connecticut
341 Mansfield Road
Storrs, CT 06268-1164
(203) 486-4440
(203) 486-6308 (fax)
<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/RoperCenter/>
Cost estimates are calculated in advance by Roper Center staff depending on the definition of the data request. Hourly staff charge of \$75 per hour. Sidebar: Quite a bit of searching can be done for a total cost of less than \$200. Access by calling the above number to order a customized archive "search". The Center library contains complete interview data in computer-readable form for 8,000 surveys conducted in the U.S. and 70 other countries, as well as organizations which deposit their data at the Center: Gallup; Roper; the *Los Angeles Times* poll and many others.

DataCenter

Fred Goff, Director
464 19th Street
Oakland, CA 94612-2297
(510) 835-4692
Is a member-supported, public interest library and research center. DataCenter makes it information available through a public-access library that houses reprint collections, research and clipping services and computerized information services. ➤

River Network Supporters

Thank you for your support

DONORS*

Adams & Adkins, Inc.
 George Allen, Jr.
 American Canoe Assoc., Dixie Division
 Katherine D. Bachman
 Bill Baker
 Robb & Julie Ball
 Lawrence & Susan Black
 John N. Caulkins
 Daniel Chapin
 John C. Chapin
 Julie Chapman & David Cushing
 Jim Coleman
 Leo Drey
 Environmental Federation of Oregon
 Si & June Foote
 Leonard H. Fremont
 Jennie Gerard
 Richard Goodwin & Judith Ball
 Gary Hahn
 Warren Kaplan
 Peter Kirsch & Patricia Reynolds
 Roger L. Krage
 Karen Kress
 Kathleen Krushas
 Lyme Timber Company
 Bob & Kim Malloy
 Ken Margolis
 Stephen Morris
 Pat Munoz
 Lawrence & Janet Myers
 Patagonia, Inc.
 John W. Peirce
 Philip Morris Companies, Inc.
 Portland General Electric
 Margaret Y. Purves
 Sarah Richards
 Jan Schorey
 Philip Smith
 Al Staats
 D. McCarty Thornton
 Dan Valens
 Sara C. Winston
 Rebecca R. Wodder

* individuals, corporations and organizations that have recently contributed \$100 or more to River Network. Foundation contributors are listed once a year in our annual report.

RENEWED PARTNERS

Alaska Clean Water Alliance, AK
 British Columbia Institute of Technology, BC
 County of El Dorado Parks & Recreation, CA
 Mill Creek Conservancy, CA
 Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, DE
 Portneuf Greenway Foundation, ID
 Idaho Watershed Project, ID
 Beargrass Creek Task Force, KY
 Louisiana Environmental Action Network, LA
 New England FLOW, MA
 Nashua River Watershed Association, MA
 Cannon River Watershed Partnership, MN
 Cape Fear River Watch Program, NC
 Mill Creek Restoration Project, OH
 Tualatin Riverkeepers, OR
 Perkiomen Valley Watershed Association, PA
 Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin, SK
 Trout Unlimited — Upper Valley Chapter, VT
 Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission, WI

Steve Leitman, FL
 Brett Salter, GA
 Marion Stoddart, MA
 Steve Phillips, OH
 Mary Pat Peck, WV

NEW PARTNERS

Alaska Federation of Flyfishers, AK
 Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism, AR
 Friends of Arizona Rivers, AZ
 Pacific Land and Water Institute, BC
 Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District, CA

NEW PARTNERS (cont.)

Sierra Nevada Alliance, CA
 City of Redding, CA
 Headwaters Institute, CA
 Protect American River Canyons, CA
 Colorado Division of Wildlife, CO
 South Platte River Commission, CO
 Coosa River Basin Initiative, GA
 River Action, IA
 Tri-State Implementation Council, ID
 Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, ID
 Southwestern Illinois RC & D, IL
 Citizens for Environmental Care, IL
 Arrowhead Foundation, MO
 Rio Grande Bioregional Project, NM
 Association of Northwest Steelheaders, OR
 Oregon Adopt-A-River, OR
 Friends of the Clackamas, OR
 Willamette Riverkeeper, OR
 Unified Sewerage Agency, OR
 South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, SC
 Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, TN
 Great Basin Earth Science, UT
 Back Bay Restoration Foundation, VA
 Elizabeth River Project, VA
 Save Everyone's Wells River, VT
 BEAR Project, WY

Karl Glander, IN
 Ronald Ward, MI
 Michael Swift, MN
 Michele Hanson, MN
 Benjamin Longstreth, NY
 Pete Laybourn, WY

By joining the River Network Partnership, we can help you navigate your river work

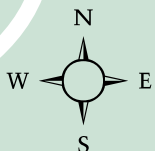


Since 1988 River Network has helped hundreds of river and watershed conservationists in their river and watershed work. Our vision is to have vigilant and effective citizen watershed councils in each of America's 2000 major watersheds. Helping river and watershed organizations through the Partnership is one strategy for making our vision a reality. Let us give you the tools you need to be effective in your community.

Here's some feedback from River Network Partners:



"I could not have founded this organization without the technical assistance and wonderful encouragement I have received from River Network."
Nancy Jacques, Colorado Rivers Alliance



"We are a young, small, understaffed organization. Your material [on fundraising] has been very helpful."
Mary Burrows, Midwest Foundation for Whitewater Excellence, Missouri



"Amid the flood of newsletters that inundate my desk, River Network's seem to regularly cover topics of special interest to community-based groups.... Their publications, filled with facts and practical information, provide a valuable service."
Dan Ray, McKnight Foundation



"River Network's watershed-based objectives dovetail nicely with our own."
Laurie McCann, Friends of the River, California

Partnership Dues

Joining the River Network Partnership is one of the best investments you can make in protecting your river and its watershed. You'll receive valuable publications (a \$122 value), plus one-on-one advice and the opportunity to network with hundreds of like-minded river and watershed conservationists from across the country.



Yes, I'd like to be a RIVER NETWORK Partner.

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Dues is based on your organization's annual budget.

Budget	Dues
\$0 - \$20,000	\$60
\$20,001 - \$100,000	\$100
\$100,001 - \$200,000	\$200
\$200,001 +	\$300

INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS

For activists who aren't yet part of an organization.
Dues: \$60

AGENCY PARTNERS

For government agencies who would like to maintain close ties to River Network. Dues: \$100

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____

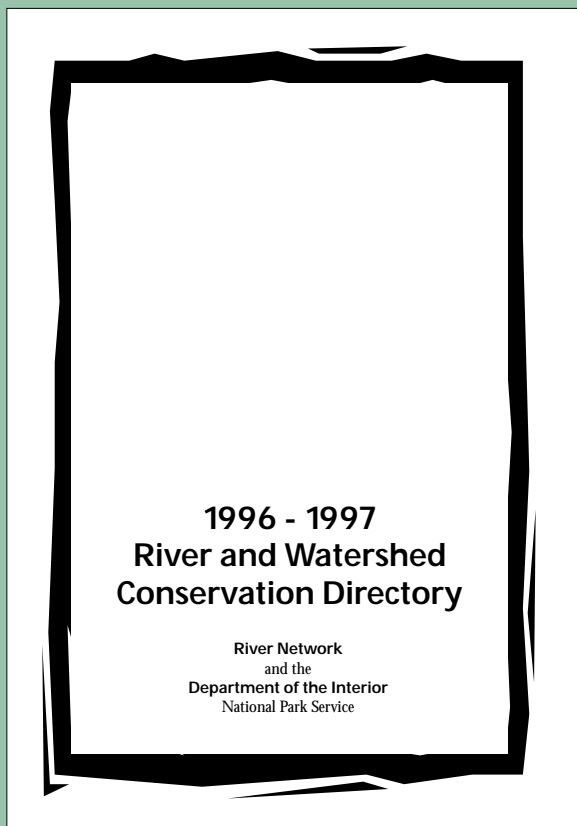
For more information contact: River Network, P.O. Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787 (503) 241-3506 rivernet@igc.apc.org



P.O. Box 8787
Portland, OR 97207

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO. 3470



The 96-97 River Conservation Directory is Here!

River Network, in cooperation with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, published the *1996-1997 River and Watershed Conservation Directory*. It includes some 3,000 organizations whose missions directly involve river and watershed conservation.

All organizations and agencies listed will receive a copy in the mail in May 1996. Additional copies are available from River Network and the National Park Service at (202) 343-3780.