

THE BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

Life. Nature. The Public. Making the Connection

A Biodiversity Communications Handbook



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Printed on chlorine-free recycled paper
Madison, Wisconsin, August 1999
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The Biodiversity Project

The Biodiversity Project began as a public education initiative of the Consultative Group on Biological Diversity (CGBD), an association of more than 40 grant makers that seeks to focus attention on issues and program opportunities related to the conservation of biological resources.

In January of 2000, the Project will become an independent organization.

Our vision is: to build a public majority that cares about the variety of life on Earth and the living interconnections that make all life on Earth possible, and to empower and motivate people to take action to protect and conserve this biodiversity, both at home and in a global context.

Our mission is: to add strength and value to the environmental movement's public outreach on biodiversity, working with partners in advocacy, education, science, communications, grantmaking and other fields. Our specific role is to be a nexus and catalyst for collaboration on biodiversity outreach strategies; to develop and disseminate proven and promising strategies and practices for communication and public education; and to strengthen the outreach capacity of groups and institutions who communicate with the public on biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Project works with non-profit organizations in the U.S. and Canada to promote public awareness and citizen involvement on domestic and global biodiversity issues. Our work has evolved in response to input from the NGO community, grantmakers and communication experts. Our specific strategy is to:

- Develop the strategy and resources to implement an integrated outreach campaign on biodiversity, working in partnership with many organizations and institutions.
- Integrate biodiversity messages into outreach campaigns on issues related to biodiversity.
- Develop the strategies and resources to reach new audiences beyond the environmental choir.

Acknowledgements

The Biodiversity Project wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their critical contributions to this handbook:

Dave Dempsey, Lead writer

John Russonello and Kate Stewart, Belden Russonello & Stewart
for chapters on communications strategies and audiences and reviewing
the text

Scott Denman and the Safe Energy Communication Council
for Hooks, Lines and Sinkers, and for other content and text review

Elizabeth Raisbeck and River Network
for the section on rivers and watersheds, and for reviewing the text

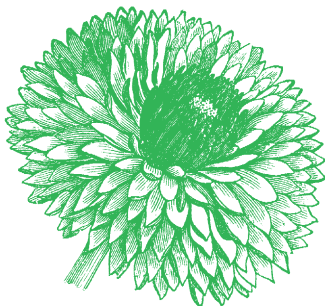
Vicki Sneed and Celinda Lake, Lake Snell Perry & Associates
for information on attitudes about spirituality and the environment,
wetlands, and other contributions

Other text reviewers:

Kathy Nemsick, Clean Water Network; Timothy Rose,
Minnesota Public Television; and Steve Blackmer, Northern Forest Center

Partners who provided graphics: Chesapeake Bay Foundation;
Coral Reef Alliance; Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life;
Endangered Species Coalition; Heritage Forest Campaign;
Sierra Club Midwest Office; and Sustain.

Nancy Zucker, Designer



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This handbook is about hope. Although it's easy to feel worry or doubt in the face of runaway loss of species and ecosystems, we participate in biodiversity conservation because we believe that loss can be checked. We also believe that in the near future people will increasingly become aware of, and take the actions necessary to protect, the richness of life and living systems that characterizes this beautiful planet.

This handbook is also about practical communication. Most biodiversity advocates do not have the luxuries of excess time and limitless staff and budgets to study and contemplate a course of action. They need support now! In the following pages you'll find tips and suggestions on how to work and communicate with your community, your region, your state or the country on biodiversity issues. You will also find resources that you can use and suggestions on how to find additional information and technical assistance.

The most important point you should take away from this handbook is that successful biodiversity communication depends on knowing and understanding your audience. It is important to recognize that your audience may have no prior knowledge and awareness of the term "biodiversity," or of its many associated issues. You need to understand your audience in order to know which words or images will move them to act. To succeed, you need to establish a bond of understanding with your audience.

Communicating with audiences—from one to one million—depends on sensitivity to them. Capitalize on the considerable public opinion and focus group research on biodiversity that was developed in the 1990s. Couple it with research of your own on an individual, community or larger scale. Use what works. Discard what your audience does not respond to. Always keep in mind that you are trying to motivate people to care enough to act. That can only happen if you have a genuine interest in and concern for their level of awareness, and if you use language that means something to them.

Ultimately, biodiversity communication requires both principle and flexibility: the principle that protecting the abundance and variety of life on the Earth is good for people and the planet and is the right thing to do; the flexibility to tailor and adapt your work to move your audience.

This handbook contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1: The Starting Point: Biodiversity and Americans' Experiences. Information and advice on the art of communicating a complex issue in ways Americans can link to their everyday experiences.

Chapter 2: Biodiversity: Safe and Good to Talk About. Tips on language to use and on methods to make biodiversity real and meaningful to your audience.

Chapter 3: Creating a Communications Strategy. Critical steps to follow in designing your strategy to communicate biodiversity.

Chapter 4: Reaching the Public With Biodiversity Messages. Working through

"If a concern for life is part of human nature, if part of our culture flows from wild nature, then on that basis alone it is fundamentally wrong to extinguish other life forms. Nature is part of us, as we are part of Nature."

— Edward O. Wilson in his autobiography "Naturalist"

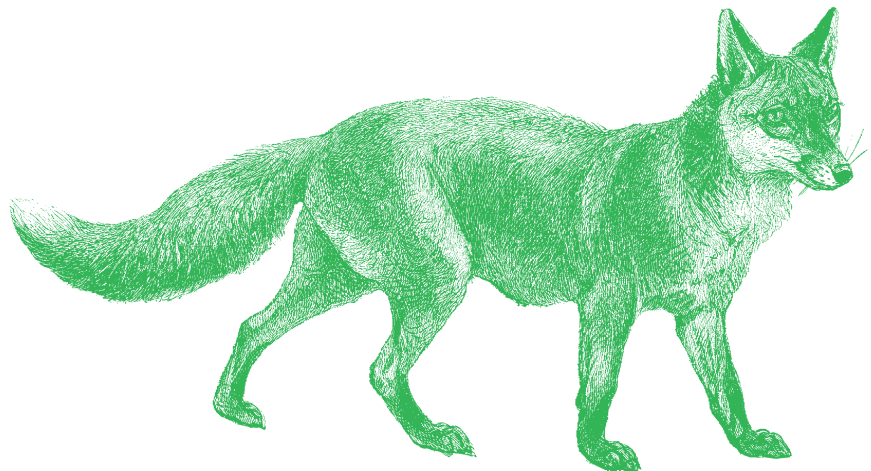


news media, non-news media, and popular culture to foster biodiversity awareness and appropriate actions.

Chapter 5: Telling the Story of Biodiversity through Issues. Applying the lessons of the handbook to the issues of suburban sprawl, forests, rivers, wetlands and endangered species.

Chapter 6: Key Audiences for Biodiversity. A brief discussion of some of the audience segments you may wish to reach.

We hope this information is helpful to you in your crucial work. Good luck in your efforts to protect biodiversity.



The Starting Point: Biodiversity and Americans' Experiences

Communicating a Complex Concept

Think about it: what has shaped and continues to shape your outlook on life? Experience is usually the best teacher. Any attempt to communicate environmental issues must understand this fundamental reality.

However, a concept as majestic in scope and as complex as biodiversity is challenging to teach through experience. Most Americans are not reminded of biodiversity by their daily routines. They live and work in cities, spending the bulk of their time indoors, surrounded by concrete and engulfed in a world that seems largely of humankind's creation.

That does not mean Americans are unaware of, or unconcerned about, conservation of biodiversity. But their exposure to and their experience of the natural world have been partial. Your challenge is to use and expand on this fragmented experience to teach the total concept of biodiversity and the importance of its conservation.

This handbook emphasizes the importance of relating biodiversity to ecosystems found in people's backyards—relating it to familiar or local landscapes, such as nearby forests, wetlands, prairies or particular river systems. Local habitats provide tangible illustrations of living ecosystems.

If you use particular types of ecosystems to explain biodiversity, remember that the public may hold pre-conceptions about them. Chapter 5 of this handbook offers some suggestions for key communications and education concepts for several of these ecosystems.

Motivating People to Act

Again, reflect on your own life. What spurs you to act? Talk of overwhelming threats? Or the encouragement that you can contribute to solving a problem?

To motivate people to act, your communications must inspire, rather than discourage, your audience. To help people change behaviors, you will need to inspire them to believe that:

"This country's wisdom still resides in its populace, in the pragmatic and generous spirits of every day citizens who have not forgotten their kinship with nature. They are individuals who will forever hold the standard of the wild high, knowing in their hearts that natural engagement is not an interlude but a daily practice, a commitment each generation must renew in the name of bedrock democracy."

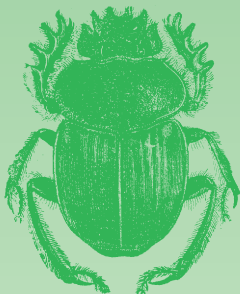
— Terry Tempest Williams

- I can make a difference: I am not overwhelmed, and I see how my choices affect my life, family and community.
- I know what to do and how to do it: I know what to do as a consumer, a parent, a young person, homeowner or renter, and voter.
- I can do it and succeed: I have role models, mentors, and allies, and we have succeeded in the past.

In communicating with your audience, remember that it's natural for them to be paralyzed by feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Combat this apathy by offering solutions, positive actions and success stories. Whenever possible, use familiar examples, personal experiences and local issues to raise awareness and stir pride in unique local habitats.

While focusing on local issues—the immediate evidence of biodiversity challenges and opportunities in your community—you can link them to global issues as your audience's understanding develops. This can stimulate continued action and concern even after a local issue is resolved.

Remember what inspires you to work on biodiversity. We bring tremendous power to our work when we speak from the heart, and when we draw upon the deep motivations that bring us to this kind of work. Says Brock Evans, Chair of the Endangered Species Coalition: “That is the secret—almost the entire, the only secret of how we succeed so much, in the face always of such odds arrayed against us and what we stand for.” You won't go wrong if you appeal to the everyday local experiences of people with messages that offer hope and practical action.



Biodiversity: Safe and Good to Talk About

A few basic pieces of background information are helpful for developing a strategy to communicate on biodiversity issues. While some of the points we make in this section are based on common sense, others rely on the insights provided by polling and focus group research.

Americans' Perspectives on Biodiversity

The polling firm Belden & Russonello conducted a nationwide survey of 2,000 adults in 1996 to assess public attitudes on biodiversity and related issues. Soak up as much of this information as possible before designing your communication strategy. Here are some of the findings you should know:

- The term “biological diversity” is practically invisible to the American public; only 2 in 10 Americans surveyed in 1996 said they had heard of it.
- Despite lack of familiarity with the term, most Americans were aware of species loss and understood that humans are largely responsible for causing it.
- While support for the concept of biological diversity was widespread when the term was explained, this support was undermined when jobs, property rights, or human comfort or convenience were contrasted with it.
- The top concerns of Americans surveyed about biological diversity related to human health and well being, including potential loss of reproductive capacity and potential birth defects.
- Among environmental issues, Americans were most concerned about clean water and toxic pollution.
- The research concluded that, for the broadest audience, compelling messages would link the values of responsibility to family and to future generations with concerns about environmental quality and ecosystem services.
- While respect for God’s creation is a widely held value, environmentalists and environmental organizations are viewed skeptically as sources for interpreting the will of God; messages that speak to this value should be sensitively crafted, respectful, and delivered by credible sources, such as clergy.

“We can measure the distance to the moon to an accuracy of centimeters, but haven’t explored the wonder of our own world’s species. Are there 10 million, 50 million, or 100 million—and what genetic wonders do they hold? Certainly this is the frontier of the future, in which we can prospect for food, fuel, pharmaceuticals, and fibers as we once prospected for gold and silver.”

— Timothy E. Wirth,
former U.S.
Undersecretary
of State for
Global Affairs

Scientific Definition of Biodiversity

Scientists do not consider biodiversity as a single item. It is a fabric that includes the following threads:

- Genetic diversity, including variations in genes within a species or population;
- Species diversity, meaning the variety of living species at local, regional, or global scales;
- Higher taxonomic diversity, referring to the variety of living organisms at higher levels such as genera or families at local, regional or global scales;
- Community diversity, meaning the variety between groups of organisms from several different species that occur and interact in the same habitat; and
- Ecosystem diversity, covering the variety of ecological units which consist of communities of organisms interacting with their physical environment.

Obviously, that's a mouthful. It's much more than most audiences can absorb. Use the definition only with the appropriate audience—which probably means one that consists of scientists or other highly sophisticated listeners.

Source: The Nature Conservancy
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First Steps in Talking About Biodiversity

When you start to develop communications on biodiversity you should keep in mind the following: a) defining biodiversity; b) making biodiversity real; c) making the human connection to biodiversity; d) stressing responsibility and opportunity; e) giving people something specific to do to address the issue.

Define It

You can't assume your audience knows what biodiversity means. To get your communication work off to a good start, you need to define the term appropriately for the audience.

The American Museum of Natural History calls biodiversity “our life-support system,” adding: “Biodiversity refers to the variety of genetic materials within species, the variety of species in all taxonomic groups, and the variety of communities, ecosystems, and landscapes within which species evolve and coexist.”

The Consultative Group on Biodiversity says biodiversity is “the total variety of genes and species among living organisms and the ecological communities they inhabit...the spectacular array of life on Earth.”

The Biodiversity Project calls biodiversity “the grand diversity of life and all the interconnections that make all life on Earth possible.”

Most of your practical communication will require speaking of biodiversity in terms familiar to the everyday experience of Americans. Discuss key concepts like the overall diversity of life on Earth, the need for diverse habitat to support life, and the relationship between habitat and species. Use language the audience probably has heard already: terms like “nature,” the “web of life,” the “circle of life,” “interdependence,” and “ecosystem.” Avoid terms like “biome,” “endemic,” “extirpated,” “exotic species” and “taxonomic.”

In defining biodiversity, talk about the ways in which biodiversity manifests itself in the community as well as in the world. You could talk about the role a local wetland plays in reducing floods, providing duck habitat and filtering water pollutants, or about the variety and abundance of songbirds, frogs and other species. Whenever possible, define biodiversity by tying it to something tangible and easily accessible, rather than remote or massive.

Make It Real

As we've stressed before, promoting understanding of biodiversity begins at home. The scale of national and international biodiversity conservation may overwhelm your audience, and be difficult or impossible for them to grasp readily. Here are ways to make it local and personal:

Talk about threats or opportunities affecting local ecosystems. If a wetland or forest in your back yard or community is threatened—or a plan is developed to

protect it—you have a chance to talk about biodiversity as a matter of habitats and species close to home. You also have a chance to explain the related concept of ecosystem services—the provision of clean water, fresh air and productive soils—on the local level.

Talk about threats or opportunities affecting members of the audience as consumers. The loss of distant habitats or species can have impacts close to home. Degradation of wetlands and other natural buffers outside the area may jeopardize the local drinking water or a favorite food item. For example, pollution and wetland destruction in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem have dramatically reduced fish and shellfish harvests. Disruption of ecosystems that supply foods may have significant impact on our daily lives. For example, suppliers have predicted a global shortage of chocolate due to deforestation and farming practices.

And not just food is at risk. Loss of plant or animal species in distant rainforests or in a nearby meadow may rob your audience of future medicines with potential for extending life and promoting its quality.

Make the Human Connection

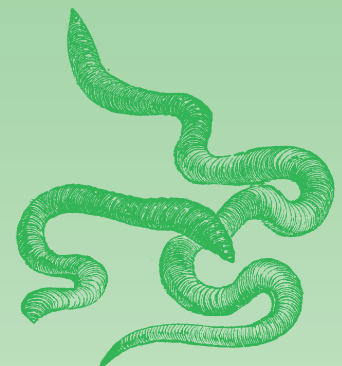
While most Americans innately wish to protect other forms of life, polling and focus group research demonstrates some audiences may feel compromise is necessary, and that “human needs” come first. Your job as a communicator on biodiversity is to make the link for them between other species and habitats and human needs:

- Talking about healthy ecosystems as life support systems for people is not only valid, but also persuasive. You should be comfortable talking about how wetlands store flood waters and cleanse pollutants thereby protecting drinking water. For example, New York City’s drinking water supply depends on healthy watersheds in upstate New York.
- Our food supply depends on living soils and natural pollinators. Shrinking populations of honeybees and other pollinators jeopardize the production of foods ranging from apples to zucchini.
- If you are asked why a weed, mold or fungus is important to protect, you can defend them, too, as useful to human life. Indian snakeroot yielded reserpine, a muscle relaxant and anti-anxiety medication. Molds yielded penicillin. The wheat fungus ergot yielded antihistamines, which are used to treat allergies and motion sickness. A wild mushroom currently shows promise as the source for a powerful new anti-viral drug.

While there are reasons beyond human needs that justify biodiversity protection, many Americans are pragmatists. Show them the considerable valid evidence that their own welfare is linked to biodiversity.

Emphasize Responsibility and Opportunity

Gloom and doom lead to despair. While we should not sugarcoat the many serious threats to biodiversity, we must help audience members see that their actions can



make a difference in preventing biodiversity loss, thereby protecting their families and their future. The 1996 biodiversity poll showed Americans are aware they share in the responsibility for protecting biodiversity. But a message that blames humans without showing how we can fix what we have done defeats our objectives.

Give People Something Specific to Do

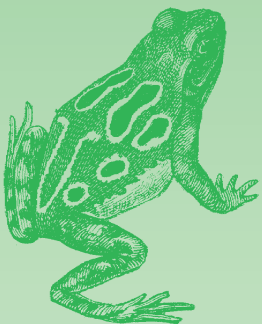
Tell your audience how they can help support a solution through specific actions. Humankind is responsible for most threats to biodiversity, but we have the opportunity to repair and heal much of the damage. Provide suggestions on a range of activities from the personal to the political that an interested person can take. Mention specific actions that will help you achieve your campaign goal, such as attending a hearing, writing a letter, or participating in a local habitat restoration project. In addition to specific campaign-related actions, you can offer people a range of personal activities that will support your longer-term goals.

There are simple and not so simple things individuals can do to make a difference for biodiversity. When your goal is general public education, rather than specific campaign work, there are a number of possible actions you might suggest. The following are a few examples:

Simple things: buy organic produce, recycled paper products, certified wood products, shade-grown coffee, biodegradable detergents and vegetable-based cleaning products; choose products with minimal packaging; reduce overall consumption; avoid products that cannot be reused or recycled. Get your lawn (and garden) off drugs; clean up pet waste; conserve water; turn down the heat and turn off the air conditioning. Learn about ten native plants in your area.

Less simple but still easy: landscape with native plants; start an organic garden and save the seeds; compost; create backyard habitat with fence rows, brush piles, gardens, nesting boxes, feeding stations and water sources. Find out where your drinking water comes from and what is in it. Find out where your wastewater goes. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. Use reusable canvas bags when shopping. Minimize your use of plastics and other petroleum products. Join an environmental group, conservancy, etc., or provide financial support. Participate in an annual species count. Pick a public policy issue; learn about it; and write to your elected officials. Get involved.

Big things: choose a home in a traditional or mixed-use development, not an undeveloped area; reduce your automobile use by using mass transit, car pooling, walking or biking whenever possible. Buy low environmental impact appliances and products; buy organic cotton clothing; buy sustainably-produced wood products. Really reduce your overall consumption of products, especially those that cannot be reused or recycled. Practice voluntary simplicity. Change your eating habits. Consider reducing your consumption of meat. Eat more locally grown food. Support renewable energy. Remove invasive exotic plants; start a native plant nursery; buy habitat acreage for protection; build a nature trail. Become a leader on a local land use issue. Run for public office.



Creating a Communications Strategy

Crafting a communications strategy on biodiversity requires patience, discipline, and some creative thinking. It is the same process you would use to communicate on other social issues, such as public education, health care, or the criminal justice system. The challenge for those of us who are communicating on the environment is to convey the seriousness of the topic without crushing our audience with its weight.

There are six basic steps to planning a communications strategy. **All of these steps should be accomplished before a phrase is uttered or a single pamphlet distributed.**

1. Determine goals.
2. Determine your audience.
3. Listen to and learn about your audience.
4. Develop a message and enlist messengers.
5. Do your homework on issues.
6. Know the opposition.

A detailed discussion of each of these steps follows.

Determine Goals

Is your goal broad-based education? Changing public policy? Raising money? Changing the behavior of the public? Something else? A communications effort has a better chance of being successful if you:

- Are clear about your goals, and are as specific as possible;
- Know what you are trying to accomplish within a given time frame; and
- Set goals that can be measured.

Too often the goal of environmentalists is simply: “To create a new way of thinking by everyone toward the environment.” This type of goal is too general and elusive. A more attainable goal would be: “To increase public support at town meetings in St. Charles County, MD, to limit development that endangers wetlands.” This is specific, measurable, and leads to your next step, identifying the audience for communications.

“In the information age, no organization of any significant size or purpose should lack an active communications plan. The private sector has known this for years, saturating society with advertising and public relations campaigns to bring in customers, improve its market share, and boost sales. But in the nonprofit sector, where the bottom line is harder to measure, the need for good public communications is often sidelined or neglected as incidental to the greater cause.”

— Kathy Bonk, Henry Griggs, Emily Tynes, “Strategic Communications for Nonprofits”

Primary/ Secondary American Values

Basic or **Primary Values**

- Responsibility to care for one's family
- Responsibility to care for oneself
- Personal Liberty
- Work
- Spirituality/Belief in God
- Honesty/integrity
- Fairness/ equality.

Secondary Values include:

- Responsibility to care for others
- Personal fulfillment
- Respect for authority
- Love of country or culture.

Source: Human Values and Nature's Future: Americans Attitudes on Biological Diversity by Belden Russonello & Stewart

Determine your Audience

Your goal should help you determine with whom you must communicate to accomplish the task. Sometimes you need to reach multiple audiences. For example, if your goal is to shape public policy, you have three audiences: voters or voting groups in general, key constituents and decision-makers. Some communications efforts may need to target women voters, or parents of young children, or seniors; other efforts may be more focused on influential civic leaders. Also, the media should be considered an audience, sometimes the prime and sometimes the secondary target.

The key point: Determining your goals and audiences is a prerequisite to message development.

Listen to and Learn about Your Audience

Before deciding what to communicate to your audience to advance your goal, it's extremely helpful to step back and listen to the concerns of those you want to reach. We often tend to assume our audience holds the same priorities we do, or that they care about an issue for the same reasons we do. But this is rarely the case, and such assumptions can be self-defeating.

The listening process can be as informal as having conversations with members of your audience to gain a more in-depth understanding of their feelings and beliefs, or as scientific as hiring a professional public opinion research firm to conduct a survey or focus groups.

Start with Values

As you investigate your audience, you should be listening for the core values they bring to the issues at hand. Core values are those deeply held beliefs that form the foundation of all attitudes and behavior. By listening for values, you learn the keys to communications that will create concern and may change behavior.

In-depth research by Belden Russonello & Stewart finds that most Americans share the basic or primary values. There are also widely-held secondary values.

In the 1996 Biodiversity Survey, when people were asked to choose their most important personal reason to care about protecting the environment, three of these values were the **most widely held** by Americans:

- Responsibility to future generations;
- Nature is God's creation;
- A desire for one's family to enjoy a healthy environment.

An appreciation of nature's beauty and a belief in nature's rights and intrinsic value were selected by much smaller segments of the public. These findings illustrate that messages based simply on the innate importance of protecting nature for nature's sake will command less support than other messages. Stronger messages respond to the public's values of responsibility to their families, future generations, and God's creation.

Understanding your audiences' values and how they shape attitudes is instrumental in designing effective communications. It is also critical to distinguish **values** from **concerns**. Values are the lasting framework through which people view particular issues. Concerns are current or chronic worries people have about their own or their families' health, economic status, and future.

Public Opinion Research Can Help

If resources permit, public opinion research, conducted by an experienced professional, can be a valuable tool in communications planning. This type of research is a more scientific form of listening to audiences to help determine the most appealing messages and to identify key segments of the public (sympathizers, opponents and those in the middle). Equipped with survey and focus group data, environmental advocates are able to use communications resources where they can make the most difference.

Public opinion research can help answer the following questions:

- Where does the public stand on your issue? Does a majority support or oppose your objectives?
- What are the most salient reasons for the public to care about your issue?
- What stands in the way of increasing concern, and how can you overcome these barriers?
- What segments of the public are most supportive of your positions; which segments are in the middle and possibly persuadable; and which segments, if any, are not persuadable?

There are two basic research tools to aid in developing and implementing a communications strategy—focus groups and surveys. These methods are used to uncover attitudes, to identify the language and imagery to include in communications, and to help identify key segments in the population for targeting outreach. While both of these methods are useful, they bring different things to message development.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are qualitative research. They consist of about eight to ten individuals who gather together to participate in a moderated discussion that lasts about two hours. Focus groups:

- Examine the ways in which people process information and the values and motivations that underlie their attitudes;
- Uncover new themes that persuade people;
- Explore reactions to specific language and messages; and
- Provide valuable feedback on visual presentations.



Low-Cost Research Techniques

If you can't afford the services of a professional polling firm, here are some alternatives. **We don't recommend attempting to design your own survey and using volunteers to conduct polls or focus groups because the results will not be reliable.**

- Conduct one-on-one interviews with concerned constituencies—"person on the street" (or "in the mall") interviews.
- Contact your local college—many social science departments conduct opinion research and may be able to use your issue as a teaching tool.
- Talk to people who you know aren't environmentalists—your mother-in-law, the mail carrier, your car mechanic, the cab driver—folks from different life experiences. Find out what they think about protecting species, stopping development in your community, etc. You may get an informative earful!
- If your organization runs a canvass (or you work with one that does), arrange a debriefing with canvassers. They'll be able to tell you how the door-to-door conversations are running, neighborhood by neighborhood.

Source: River Talk! Communicating a Watershed Message by River Network

Focus groups may be used on their own to inform communications, or they may be used in conjunction with a survey. Prior to a survey, group discussions explore the range of opinions people hold on an issue and help to determine the wording of the questions asked in a survey. After a survey, focus groups can explain findings and illuminate motivations of key audiences identified in the survey.

Survey Research

Survey research allows you to uncover how important an issue is to people and to whom it is most important. **Survey research is quantitative** and is used:

- To measure the salience of issues;
- To quantify level of support;
- To gauge the strongest and weakest arguments for an issue; and
- To identify target audiences for communications.

Review Existing Data

Over the last few years, many environmental groups have begun using opinion research. In many instances, it is useful to see what has already been done before undertaking a new research project on a specific issue. Survey data can be obtained from a number of sources including your colleagues at other environmental organizations, private research firms and the news media. Two of the best sources are university-based archives: the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. Both of these archives house a great deal of survey research. To uncover focus group research will take a little more digging around among colleagues and friends.

Develop a Message and Enlist Messengers

Developing a message on biodiversity can benefit from a checklist of reminders. Here are nine points to keep in mind.

- 1. Make sure you've identified goals and audiences first.**
- 2. Identify values and concerns.**
- 3. A message is a paragraph, not a slogan.**
- 4. Use language that speaks to your audience.**
- 5. Be ready with anecdotes.**
- 6. Use images.**
- 7. When using facts, be specific.**
- 8. Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!**
- 9. Choose messengers that complement the message and carry weight with audiences.**

STEWARDSHIP VALUE

HEALTH CONCERNS

CONCERNS:
LOSING SERVICES THAT
NATURE PROVIDES TO
HUMANS
(ECOSYSTEM SERVICES)

- MEDICINES
- PROTECTION FROM EROSION,
STORM SURGE, FLOODS
- BREEDING GROUNDS
- PRESERVES FOR
MARINE LIFE

Anatomy of a Message

Healthy Coral Reefs Make a Healthy World

Coral reefs provide so many more benefits than meet the eye. In fact, a healthy reef may touch your life far more often than you think.

Even if you're not a diver, there are many reasons why you should join the fight to preserve what's left of our coral reefs.

Medical Breakthroughs:



The incredible diversity of coral reef life produces unique chemicals that could unlock the secret to the cure for cancer and other diseases.

Killing the reefs could prevent scientists from saving thousands - even millions of human lives.



Fish Breeding Grounds:

Coral reefs serve as breeding grounds and nurseries for young fish, sheltering them from predators. If the reefs are destroyed, whole species of fish would be decimated, disrupting the entire oceanic food chain.



Natural Breakwaters:

Reefs protect coastal shores from erosion, waves and floods. Hundreds of thousands of acres of beaches would be washed away without reefs to protect them.

Dazzling Underwater Wonderland:



Used properly by divers, coral reefs provide thrills for the senses found nowhere else in the world. The reef's vivid colors and infinite varieties of wildlife provide a natural underwater wonderland that we must protect for future generations to enjoy.



PERSONAL FULFILLMENT
PROTECTING NATURE'S BEAUTY

A short discussion of each point follows.

1. Make Sure You've Identified Goals and Audiences First

As discussed earlier, before you are ready to write a message, you need to define what you are hoping to accomplish and identify the target of your communication. If your goals are fuzzy, you'll find it difficult or impossible to develop an effective media strategy.

2. Identify Values and Concerns

A message must lead with values and reflect the concerns of your audience. It should answer the following question, from your audience's perspective: Why should I care about this issue?

You need to know:

- **Values:** What core values in your audience are reflected in their concerns? Is it a sense of personal responsibility? Caring for the Earth? Concern for family? Respect for God's creation?
- **Concerns:** What about the issue is important to your audience? Their health? Their quality of life? What is imminent or significant about its impact on the audience and therefore appears on its radar screen?

3. A Message Is a Paragraph, Not a Slogan

If you are at a neighbor's door and you have about one minute to engage and convert him or her to your cause, what do you say? You need a clear, compelling and short paragraph that does three basic things:

- Gives your neighbor a reason to care about your issue, by appealing to values.
We care about our family's health and we feel a responsibility to protect their quality of life.
- Describes a threat and who is responsible for the problem.
The local wetland (or forest area), which helps to clean our air and water, gives us beauty and recreation, and is home to many plants and animals, is about to be destroyed by irresponsible development. This type of development has already destroyed X miles of habitat in our community.
- Provides a solution. Describes what action will address the need and the threat. Whenever possible, give people something to do—an action that allows them to respond to the threat.
We can prevent this destruction by making our views known at the next city council meeting. Here's the date. Please come and bring a friend.

Making sure it speaks to the way people sort through problems can strengthen a message. Does it appeal to our emotions? Does it provide us with information? Does it give us an action we can take?



A slogan and a soundbite can be easily lifted from your message. A slogan might be: “*Development is forever.*” A soundbite might be: “We must protect our families’ quality of life. If Smith Marsh is destroyed, it’s gone forever.” These are shorthand applications of your message that can be useful as a tag line in communications, but they are not a substitute for a thoughtful, well-constructed message paragraph.

4. Use Language that Speaks to Your Audience

Sometimes what we are saying is not what our audience is hearing. Different audiences bring different perspectives on issues, especially on environmentalism. A logger in the Pacific Northwest may have a different attitude toward “government regulation” than a suburban mom in New Jersey. No one set of “preferred” words or phrases may be appropriate for all circumstances. So, the best advice is to be sensitive to your audience. Here are some other general pieces of advice:

Environmentalists: In some regions, the word “conservationist” is much more acceptable than “environmentalist” to large segments of the public. In other areas, the word environmentalist may be a plus.

Jargon: Avoid using bureaucratic words and acronyms (like TMDLs) to describe a problem. Jargon sends the message that you are from Washington, D.C., which is rarely a positive point to make.

Calling for standards is often better than demanding regulations. Speak of protecting rivers and forests instead of talking about natural resource protection. Talk about protecting communities instead of needs assessments or growth management.

Balance: Americans generally believe that no side has a monopoly on true wisdom, so an appeal to balance is often welcomed. This concept can be used most effectively in the negative, accusing the other side of advocating policies that are out of balance.

Habitats and Ecosystems: These are positive terms that the public usually understands as homes for plants and animals. Ecosystem has the added virtue of conveying that all things in the environment (eco) are connected for a purpose (system). It is one of the best words to use when describing biodiversity.

5. Be Ready with Anecdotes

Having a human story that illustrates and amplifies your message is absolutely critical to a successful communications effort. Often the side that presents the most compelling human story first wins, because the other side never recovers. So, it is essential that the human story be lined up before you begin communicating.

When the other side tells a story of a logger who has filed for unemployment after 30 years on the job, the forest and spotted owl do not stand a chance. When the public hears a story of a woman who lost her home because of the government’s efforts to save a kangaroo rat, species everywhere take a hit. There is no question that opponents of threatened and endangered species have used these often inaccurate “horror stories” to attract media coverage and win the sympathies of federal and state legislators.

Using an Anecdote

However, environmental groups have become increasingly skillful at telling the true story of benefits—including lives saved—from the protection of threatened and endangered species. The Endangered Species Coalition's mid-1990s message campaign featured Jackie Buckley, who as a young child was diagnosed

with leukemia. The Coalition's ads pointed out, "she is in remission and has an 80% chance of survival thanks to the medicines derived from the rosy periwinkle." The ad concluded that half of modern medicines come from natural sources, many of which are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

© 1995, ESAC

She's alive today because of this flower.

Three years ago Jackie Buckley was diagnosed with leukemia. Today she is in remission and has a 80% chance of survival thanks to the medicines derived from the flower of the rosy periwinkle.

Half of today's medicines come from natural sources. The Endangered Species Act is the best protection these sources have. But now the Act itself is in danger.

Tell Congress to save the law that saves lives. Use the label in this ad, or for more information, call (202) 547-8009.

Help save the Endangered Species Act.
Clip this label and make copies for your friends. Fill out the labels, affix to empty medicine bottles, and mail them to The President, and your Representatives in Congress.

Address for President Clinton
President Bill Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20503

Address for Senators and Representatives
The Honorable member of your Senator or Representatives
U.S. Senate/U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20543/20515

Full Page (7 x 10")

To: _____
Please support the Endangered Species Act. It benefits people as well as wildlife. The Act safeguards species with proven life-saving medicinal value, and those whose value awaits discovery. Protect the Endangered Species Act, so it can help protect us!

Name: _____
Address: _____

**THE
ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
PROTECTS US!**

The Endangered Species Coalition

Source: Endangered Species Coalition

6. Use Images

Pictures tell a story, evoke emotions and appeal to values. They need to be front and center of a communications effort on the environment, and they should be chosen very carefully. An image that is too harsh may offend or be seen as extreme. One that evokes only beauty may send a message that all is well and no action is needed.

The best guide is that images should reflect the message, which will include a positive appeal to values and a description of the problem. Therefore, a mix of positive images about what is worth protecting combined with disturbing images of the problem is often a winning formula.

7. When Using Facts, Be Specific

Your message and images must be backed by specific facts. Journalists and the public have become increasingly skeptical of information presented by advocates; so facts should be specific, not general, in order to have the most credibility. For example, it is better to provide the number of acres of forest that will be lost due to a certain action by government or industry, rather than simply to say

“vast amounts of forest.” Simplify statistics; say “3 out of 4” instead of 75%. Package the facts so the audience can easily grasp them. Use facts that relate to people’s daily lives or experience, such as “the water we drink every day” or “the air our children breathe.”

8. Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

Once a message is decided, make it the mantra that is repeated over and over again. Do not assume anyone has heard the message, even if you are quoted in the media two or three times. Most audiences—public, media, legislators—have other things to think about than your issue. If your core message is different from one week to the next, your audience will not comprehend any one thing. You must have one core message and stay with it.

Communication is not effective if it presents a variety of arguments in the hope that one resonates. A diversity of messages results in a lack of clarity. Instead, you need to decide on the most effective message and repeat it until it makes you crazy.

Using
Appropriate
Messengers

**If You Think
Our Air Is Clean Enough,
You Haven't Talked To Kyle.**

Kyle is eight years old. He lives in Chicago. He loves to swim and play basketball. However, like millions of Americans, Kyle has asthma, and he is very sensitive to air pollution. On many days Kyle must stay indoors just to breathe. Sometimes dirty air aggravates his asthma so much that he has to be rushed to the hospital.

Based on current air quality standards, the air is “healthy” in metropolitan Chicago nearly 99 percent of the time, and yet thousands of people are getting sick, filling our emergency rooms, and even dying prematurely from air pollution at levels considered safe by the federal government.

The Clean Air Act has made our air cleaner, but we need to do more for the sake of Kyle and others like him. Now is the time to make it happen. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed stronger air quality standards that would lead to cleaner air, but polluters have launched an expensive campaign to defeat the proposal. Please read the other side of this flyer to find out how you can help.

Our Kids Need Clean Air!

Our Kids Need Clean Air!

photos: Keith Ashdown

Source: Sustain: The Environmental Information Group for the Sierra Club

Using Appropriate Messengers

The Endangered Species Coalition worked with three nontraditional messengers in its mid-1990s campaign to save the federal Endangered Species Act. Elaine Forman was a **cancer survivor** who had benefited from the drug taxol, derived from the Pacific yew tree, found largely in old growth forests of the Northwest. Juliana Clausen was an **organizer of a grassroots organization** that worked to save the habitat of wintering bald eagles in Sauk-Prairie Wisconsin, and helped promote the area as a viewing site that lured thousands of tourists, providing important economic benefits. Kevin Scribner was a **professional salmon fisherman** who supported the ESA because without it, his industry was in jeopardy of extinction along with the salmon.

Source: Endangered Species Coalition

9. Choose Messengers that Complement the Message and Carry Weight with Your Audience

The choice of a messenger for a communications effort must depend on what message you want to convey and whom you are addressing.

All three elements—message, audience and messenger—must complement one another. The biggest mistake an organization can make is to decide on a messenger before it knows the audience and message for communication.

Messages are typically most credible when they come from people affected by an issue or problem rather than those far removed. For example:

- Environmental organizations supporting tougher EPA clean air standards to curb smog and ozone worked with physicians and asthma sufferers. Doctors and patients were the best messengers for a story about health threats.
- When communicating a spiritual message about biodiversity to religious Americans, clergy are far more likely to be persuasive messengers than executive directors of environmental organizations.
- When paper companies want to send a message to families that they care about the future by planting trees, they use six- and seven-year-olds to carry their message instead of corporate CEOs.

Following these nine steps, from deciding on goals, to writing a message paragraph, to having an anecdote ready and finding an appropriate messenger, will provide a sound foundation for communicating an effective message.

Do Your Homework on Issues

Once you have identified your communications goals and audience, and you are sitting down to develop your message, it is important to determine the facts and figures that best fit with your communications. Marshaling your facts—putting your information together—is a prerequisite to communications success.

If you're hoping to stir the public to act to support wetlands protection, for example, you might have such information as:

- The rate of wetlands loss in your community;
- A comparison of that rate to losses elsewhere or to earlier times in your community;
- Examples of harm that have resulted in your community from wetlands loss;
- A description of the benefits that wetlands provide to people and wildlife;
- Expert quotations or references on the values of wetlands; or
- Examples of successes other communities have had in protecting their wetlands.

At the initial stages, compile as much *relevant* information as you can, double- and triple-check it for accuracy, and hone it to the essentials you wish to provide to your audience(s).

Developing fact sheets is an excellent way to identify the most convincing and relevant piece of information. A fact sheet is also handy for dealing with the media and for helping staff stay on message when they talk to the public. Lead with the most important facts. **Always include contact information and the date.**

Know the Opposition

The best-laid communications strategy can go awry if it does not take into account the opposition's messages. Anticipating how the opposition will attempt to counter your campaign and define its side of the issue puts you one step ahead, and could be decisive.

Knowing your opposition will help you to anticipate attacks. This will allow you to be ready with a defense, or you may decide to raise the issue first and diffuse the attacks. Similarly, before they have a chance to communicate their arguments, you may have a chance to uncover and expose their weaknesses.

By now, many of the effective strategies of biodiversity opponents are well known. They appeal to Americans' innate belief in freedoms, including freedom of choice, and rights, including private property rights. Consider putting these values to work legitimately for your own messages or illustrating how the opposition falls short in protecting them. You can decide to take a defensive position or an offensive position, but at least you will be prepared.

Action Plan to Implement a Communications Strategy

When you've mapped out your basic communications strategy, it's time to develop and implement your plan:

1. Start with the goals and objectives you've just outlined in your strategy.
2. Assess your resources (how much people power and funding do you have?).
3. Define your tactics - where and when will you get the biggest impact, where's the leverage, how will this work?
4. What's your timeline?
5. Commit to the plan.
6. Go to work.
7. Assess; revisit; revise as needed.
8. Were the objectives reached? Evaluate what worked, what didn't, and plan for your next effort.

Source: Safe Energy Communication Council

Reaching the Public with Biodiversity Messages

There is more than one way to reach the public with biodiversity messages. Let's talk about several of the most important: news media, non-news media, and popular culture. Other routes to the public include organizing and environmental education.

News Media

The conventional news media of TV, radio and newspapers could be more effectively approached by biodiversity advocates. Understanding the needs and limitations of reporters in each medium is essential to communicating effectively through them.

General Tips on Working with News Media

Presenting the biodiversity message requires not only understanding your audience, but also understanding the news media. The nature of the news business has changed dramatically in recent years, and you need to be aware of how to capitalize on these changes. For example:

News releases are a useful way of organizing your arguments, but just a good first step in getting coverage. By their nature, releases are disseminated to numerous reporters. Some reporters will dismiss releases for that reason, knowing they will not have an “exclusive.” Nonprofit organizations may labor so much over releases that they fail to understand they are doing what should be the reporter's job. The stereotype of a reporter waiting for handouts is exaggerated. Some prefer raw information that they can turn into stories, rather than being spoon-fed. This is especially true of print reporters.

But releases can serve important purposes. Composing them will help you organize your thoughts and refine the message you are seeking to communicate. Releases can provide quotes and an organization's official announcement of, or reaction to, breaking news. They are best kept short—1-2 pages at most.

If you use news conferences, remember what the media are looking for. Remember that TV is looking for pictures. Is a picture of a person standing behind a podium going to excite or interest a TV audience? Probably not. News

“It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility.”

— Rachel Carson



Sample Press
Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Concerned Citizen
Monday, August 9, 1999

CONTACT: Katy and John
(517) xxx-xxxx

CONCERNED CITIZENS OF CLAIRMONT
SAYS PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD SACRIFICE WETLANDS
CRITICAL TO COMMUNITY'S CLEAN WATER SUPPLY

Clairmont citizens today released an analysis of the proposed Hudson's Marsh housing and golf course project which shows the development would jeopardize the community's drinking water supply and increase the risk of harmful floods.

The group urged citizens to join them in speaking out against the project at the Clairmont City Council meeting August 25. The analysis, prepared by community volunteer experts who are members of Concerned Citizens of Clairmont, predicts the loss of 17 acres of wetlands and the channeling of creeks on the site would release tons of sediment, dramatically reduce the pollutant-filtering benefits the Marsh provides, and increase the rate and amount of flood water rushing downstream.

"I'm concerned about the effect of this project on our drinking water supply," said Katy Concerned Citizen, a Clairmont mother of three. "Wetlands are nature's filtration systems. Destroying so many wetland acres puts our health at risk."

She said the disastrous spring floods on the Clairmont River in 1996 would have been even worse if the Hudson's Marsh project had already removed the wetlands. "Instead of losing wetlands, we need to restore them. That will help reduce the damage caused by floods because wetlands trap and store excess waters and release them slowly."

In addition to the loss of the water quality and flood control benefits the wetland provides, Concerned Citizens of Clairmont found in the analysis that several unusual plant and wildlife species would lose valuable habitat. The painted turtle and pitcher's plant would be displaced by the project.

For a complete copy of the analysis, contact John Concerned Citizen at (517) xxx-xxxx, or by e-mail at johnconcerned@citizen.org.

conferences also have the disadvantage of frequently seeming to be “canned” events—not real news, but a show staged solely for the benefit of cameras, tape recorders, and pens. Reporters want to cover things that are actually happening, where the outcome has at least some slight potential for unpredictability. If they do come to your press conference, they may try to create unpredictability by asking hostile questions and seeing how you handle them.

If you decide a news conference best suits your needs, you should keep several things in mind:

- Don't take more than 5-10 minutes to make your point. After that you're probably repeating yourself, or gratuitously allowing every member of a large coalition to take a turn in front of the mike. Designate a moderator or lead speaker. Limit the number of speakers and tightly limit the length of their remarks. Remember, your best messenger isn't necessarily your highest-ranking staffer, but is more likely to be someone directly affected by your issue, an expert or someone who brings other newsworthy value, such as a celebrity.
- Choose a site for the news conference that offers something visual for the TV cameras. A natural backdrop like a forest or lake, the site of flood damage, or an urban garden or city park are good sites. If you can't hold your news conference on location, use large charts or blown-up pictures, invite children or affected neighbors—any of these may help break up the “talking head” image of a news conference.
- Allow reporters to question individual participants after the formal presentation is done. Reporters will often take individuals aside to get quotes or pictures that will be exclusive to their station or newspaper. Obviously, it's important that all of the participants understand and stay with your message, so rehearse with them.

Building Relationships with the News Media

Successful work with the news media requires the cultivation of relationships with reporters, editorial writers, TV and radio assignment editors and station managers. Dropping releases or tips on reporters like bombs and then flying on is not a likely route to coverage. Reporters are understandably skeptical of claims made by people about whom they know little. While it takes time, getting to know the reporters who cover your work is the best way to build credibility and to be persuasive when the time comes for an important message. Always be honest and accurate—if you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Tell the reporter you'll try to find out the answer and call him or her back. Don't be afraid to refer them to experts who have the information. Return phone calls before the reporter's deadline. Be human; don't claim infallibility. All of these will make you a credible source.

Make an effort—read their stories, watch or listen to their coverage. Invite these people to lunch. As you get to know them, invite them on a hike or to an

Hooks, Lines, and Sinkers

One way of approaching message development was designed by Scott Denman of the Safe Energy Communication Council. The Council's media training helps activists craft messages in terms of Hooks, Lines, and Sinkers.

■ **Hooks** are short, attention-getting statements crafted to evoke a desired response from the press and a general or targeted audience. Either a headline (a complete phrase) or a soundbite (one or two sentences), a hook is typically the leadoff part of your message.

■ **Lines** elaborate on, explain and reinforce the hook. This is the key information needed to support and win an audience to your point of view.

■ **Sinkers** anticipate the content of an opponent's attack on your hook. They pre-empt the attack with a smart defense.

Participants at workshops convened by the Biodiversity Project have produced the following hooks, which we find particularly effective:

continued on page 30

- “Now disappearing at a location near you.”
- “Question: Where’s the dumbest place to put a four-lane highway?
Answer: on Bald Eagle Ridge.”
- “How would you feel if the Blackwater Canyon was posted: ‘No trespassing, and this means you?’”
- “Not all insecticides come in a can” (targeted to people afraid of bats).
- “Coming soon to a backyard near you: traffic, smog and asthma.”

Effective hooks tend to be short, humorous and linked to a local place.

Source: Safe Energy Communication Council

event just for fun, not to pitch a story. Spend time getting to know them and how their news organization works. What are their deadlines? Are they under pressure from editors? What other responsibilities do they carry? What topics do they like? How do they typically cast an issue?

Perhaps most importantly, if you have a good relationship with a reporter, you will be able to provide the occasional desired “exclusive,” and you may get very prominent coverage. If a reporter trusts what you have to say, your direct release of information such as a report, opinion survey, conservation initiative or other news will be regarded as a genuine news story. Be careful and selective in your use of exclusives; you run the risk of playing reporters against each other and appearing to play favorites.

Television

TV, of course, is a vital medium. Four out of 5 Americans list TV as their primary source of news.

Television reporters are looking for pictures. Always think of visuals when you are considering how best to make your point on television. The best and only appropriate visuals for your messages are those that capture and illustrate, rather than oversimplify your point.

An obvious but important point to make about both television and radio coverage is the extreme time limitation you have to make your case using either medium. Typically, both TV and radio coverage of an event limit a spokesperson to one or two sentences for a point of view. Therefore, it’s critical that you make your point clearly and concisely. While you do this, be sure not to stray from your central message. If a TV or radio captures a brief presentation that concentrates on a single message, there is little chance the message will be edited out or that the broader public audience will miss the point.

As your presentation expands in time and breadth, you run the risk of confusing the reporter and the audience, or of simply having a secondary or tertiary message—or a completely irrelevant aside—reach that audience. Be sure of what you want to say, and repeat it over and over, using different words to make the same point.

Remember with television that reporters come with a crew—a camera person or “videographer” and often a sound engineer, too. If you are going on location to get those good visuals—the logged-over forest, the threatened wetland, the scenic shoreline—remember that a television crew has special needs outdoors. The equipment is heavy, and battery packs get used up quickly, so don’t expect reporters to trek any distance without help and advance notice. Many crews won’t risk their equipment in inclement weather, so check the forecast. And remember that waning daylight and deep forest shadows can foreclose your chances at good video images.

A good resource to have on hand is “B-roll.” This is footage that can be edited into a TV news story and can include images of wildlife or places that illustrate the issue. It is not interviews or talking heads. Stations in smaller markets or stories with long lead times present opportunities to gather and provide B-roll.

If you have access to a volunteer videographer or cable public access equipment, you can produce your own B-roll so that it's available when you need it.

Radio

Reporters generate actualities—the sound clips they use on the air—from your pithiest points and best “sound bites” from a recorded interview. Once again, remember not to stray from your central point.

News sources, such as your organization, can also produce their own actualities and provide a “news feed” to radio stations.

Newspapers

The disadvantage of newspapers is that they play to a dwindling American audience. But they provide many important opportunities:

- The remaining audience tends to be more educated and more likely to participate in community life. And, critically important, elected officials also read newspapers.
- Newspapers enable you, at best, to flesh out your message with supporting detail important to this audience.
- You can collect news clips and keep spreading the message and the credibility the clips provide to your key audiences.
- You can win “official” support for your point of view by cultivating favorable editorials. Build relationships with editorial writers just like you do with news reporters. Seek out opportunities to write your own point-of-view pieces.

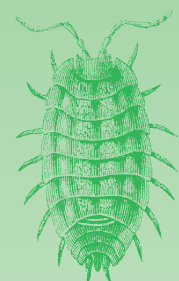
Non-News Media

In addition to traditional news media, the public increasingly receives information on critical issues outside newscasts and news pages.

Soft News/Features/Infotainment

Local TV is increasingly entertainment-focused, even within news broadcasts. Many stations produce weekly features like *The Medical Minute* or *Gardening with Gayle* as part of the news broadcast. These informational features can be a good way to introduce biodiversity topics from a variety of angles, such as health, backyard habitat or consumer interests.

Another way to get coverage is to take advantage of other newsworthy events on the calendar. One TV station produced a great educational segment on bats and cave conservation using the Halloween angle. Another used the



beginning of the school year to talk about environmental safety issues at schools, such as pesticides, asbestos and adequate ventilation. These soft news angles allow you to introduce topics to an audience in a fresh way without some of the constraints of hard news stories. Many reporters enjoy the chance to explore an interesting topic in depth if they can find a way to get their editors' approval to run the story. Creative use of the calendar can open opportunities for more and better coverage.

Locally produced talk shows such as *Live at Five* or *Good Morning Madison* are always looking for fresh, entertaining stories that go beyond the talking heads of their local newscasters. While we're unlikely to tune into "Breakfast with Biodiversity" any time soon, a creative approach and a working relationship with a producer can help get biodiversity topics on TV.

Most newspapers have weekly (sometimes weekend) health and fitness, nutrition, home and garden, science and other special sections. Working biodiversity messages into these feature-style sections requires a little creativity. For example, health section editors may be interested in the issue of medicines derived from natural sources. Home and garden editors may be curious about the opportunities to use backyard habitats as a way of preserving bird, amphibian, or mammal species. A careful reading of these sections may yield important insights into the particular needs and wants of your local special sections and the names of specialty editors and reporters.

Alternative Newsweeklies

Many cities have alternative weekly newspapers such as the Village Voice that cover issues of local interest. Many of these papers are free, and so are read by a large portion of urban dwellers. They can be important sources of information for specific audiences such as young adults. They frequently seek timely material that has relevance for their readers, and can provide the perfect opportunity for telling the story of a local threatened habitat. In addition to feature news articles, alternative weeklies often have sections offering brief updates on current issues, and in-depth features on science, cultural, and lifestyle issues—the perfect venue for a story on local backyard habitats.

Magazines

From the local to the national level, magazines are multiplying, providing new outlets for environmental information. Commercial publications are increasingly aimed at "niche" audiences, ranging from exercisers and outdoor recreationists to parents and those interested in healthful cooking and dining. While often farther from home than your local news media, these outlets should not be overlooked. Regional, state and local groups should not overlook the ever-growing market of magazines with a metropolitan focus, such as *Madison Magazine* or *Southern Living*, as an opportunity to cultivate a feature or profile on a topic related to biodiversity.



Cyberspace

Electronic mail and web sites are now indispensable sources of information to many Americans. Biodiversity advocates can make good use of them. For relatively low cost, you can establish a web site with everything from bite-size biodiversity factoids to in-depth scientific analyses and research findings. But don't just put it up and expect audiences to find it—promote it. Every written communication leaving your office should contain the web site address, and you should ask your members and allies to tell others of its existence.

Talk Radio

Don't overlook the potential of "talk radio." This format has exploded since the late 1980s. Although many progressive groups disdain talk radio because of a presumed conservative bias, don't shun it entirely. Be prepared to encounter skepticism, but disarm your host or opponent with facts and a sense of humor. Counter the stereotypes they and some of the listening audience may bring to the discussion.

Many public radio stations also host call-in or talk shows and are worth pursuing for coverage of biodiversity issues.

Popular Culture

Often, news media reach audiences already disposed to be sympathetic to our message—an educated audience interested in public affairs. But popular culture—from mass entertainment to fashion—provides an opportunity to sway larger numbers and to appeal to a greater array of interests.

For the most part, mass entertainment isn't in the business of reporting ideas and making social change happen; it is in the business of making money. If, however, your organization is in a position to work with decision-makers in the entertainment or fashion industries, look for opportunities to promote positive messages. "Free Willy" went a long way in fostering awareness of issues associated with captive marine mammals.

Celebrities can attract attention to issues and sometimes add a certain cachet to actions that we wish people would take to protect habitats and species. For example, Grammy Award winner Mary Chapin Carpenter joined forces with American Rivers to educate the American public, through a series of public service announcements, about the critical link between healthy rivers and affordable, safe drinking water supplies. Celebrity events in your community, from rock concerts to book-signing tours by popular authors, are another opportunity for public outreach when there is a match of interests between the artists and your agenda.

Other Routes to the Public: Organizing and Environmental Education

Although working through the news media is perhaps the most effective method of reaching the public to raise short-term awareness on biodiversity issues, other

routes are equally effective and more appropriate to promote long-term awareness and change. We briefly describe two of those routes here to get you started. For further help, consult the resources section at the back of the handbook.

Organizing

An effective social change strategy uses the one-two punch of media and organizing. No news medium will replace networks of people who understand the issue and the decision making process and are actively involved. But good organizing can benefit from a sophisticated media strategy. This handbook concentrates on media and public communications strategies to foster biodiversity conservation, but we encourage you and your organization to look at communications as just one element of a comprehensive outreach plan.

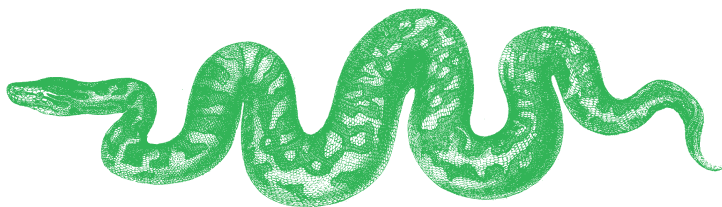
Environmental Education

A comprehensive communication strategy looks beyond the news media and public persuasion. For long-term change, environmental education is essential. It helps create an environmentally literate public more likely to care and more capable of acting on biodiversity issues.

Environmental educators encourage their pupils to examine issues, look for bias, practice skills, and make autonomous decisions (for themselves or in a group) about the best course of action. Environmental educators also increasingly strive to cultivate skills that cross disciplines.

Although teachers and administrators may be wary of what they perceive as attempts to foster a particular point of view on biodiversity issues, they will likely be receptive to outdoor learning experiences (including some on school grounds) that provide opportunities for students to learn through observing and participating. You may be able to identify opportunities in your community and serve as guides.

You may also be able to work with community institutions to raise awareness through information and education. One excellent example of how environmental education can raise awareness of biodiversity is the Chicago-area Brookfield Zoo's exhibit *The Swamp: Wonders of Our Wetlands*. This popular exhibit represents a major change in focus from zoo exhibits of the past, which emphasized threats to a particular species or ecosystem. Instead, the exhibit takes a step back and tries to build greater public understanding of wetland systems and appreciation for their function in nature and the benefits they provide to humans. Visitors travel through a mangrove swamp and typical Illinois wetland, with interactive displays illustrating flood reduction and other ecosystem services provided by wetlands.



Telling the Story of Biodiversity through Issues

Throughout this handbook we've stressed the importance of tying biodiversity to local concerns. After all, biodiversity is saved or lost one wetland, one forest, one acre at a time. It is also more easily understood as a story of the functions and values that a specific habitat type provides. This chapter provides some suggestions on how you can explain biodiversity through a range of issues. We have selected five issues: suburban sprawl; forests; endangered species; wetlands; and river and watersheds. Each issue has clear and compelling links to biodiversity. Each also has been the subject of substantial public opinion and focus group research. And on each, you can refine and select messages from suggestions developed by Biodiversity Project working groups.

Because environmental groups have conducted more extensive public opinion research and engaged in message development on the issue of sprawl, we treat the issue in greater depth than others. For all the issues we address here, we encourage you to consider the information presented as a starting point for your own work on biodiversity communication.

Issue 1: Suburban Sprawl

Loss of open spaces and prime habitats to sprawling development is, in many areas of the U.S., the chief threat to biodiversity. We all share the common goal of slowing sprawled development—a leading cause of habitat destruction—regardless of our specific local battles, demographic characteristics or overall agendas. But the exact strategy and message will depend on local situations.

What the Public Knows, Thinks and Feels about Biodiversity

Belden Russonello & Stewart conducted a series of focus groups in 1997 and 1998 on sprawl issues and produced findings important to your communications efforts in the report *Choices Between Asphalt and Nature: Americans Discuss Sprawl*.

“The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces.”

—Aldo Leopold

- Research suggests you should address the audience’s key values of responsibility to family, community and future generations; personal enjoyment of nature; freedom of choice (in the context of the choices limited by sprawl); quality of life (including open space, community, more time for family).
- The public’s top concerns about sprawl relate to the environmental impacts: protecting open space, habitat, and the species that depend on them. However, what works can be location-specific—while diversity works well in New Mexico, for example, open space and farmland arguments may not work as well as they do elsewhere.

Key Concepts to Communicate about Sprawl

- Sprawl is poorly planned or uncontrolled development that threatens our quality of life in many ways.
- Uncontrolled development destroys our green space and places in nature that we and our families use for recreation and aesthetic enjoyment, and that nourish our spirit and emotional well-being.
- Uncontrolled development destroys forests, wetlands, and other natural habitats. These areas are important because they help to clean our air and water, and provide homes for birds, fish and other wildlife.
- Development on the urban fringe is wasteful. It abandons land and resources that already exist in established cities and towns, and in which taxpayers have already made significant investments.

Messages on Sprawl that Work

Working groups assembled by the Biodiversity Project have developed the following **sample messages**, all designed for a general audience. Please tailor them to your specific audience and needs.

- An **overarching message** is, “We all have a responsibility to our families to protect parks and open space, and to invest in our communities [neighborhoods] and plan for our future. Uncontrolled development threatens our communities [neighborhoods] by destroying green space, draining resources from our communities, and taking away our individual choices about how we want to live. Therefore, we must stop [insert activity here, e.g. beltway construction], invest in our community, save green space, and leave open future choices for our children and our community [neighborhood]. (Specify a policy or solution, if possible.)”
- Supplemental messages include:

On the value of open space: “Having open space nearby enriches our families’ quality of life and community vitality. Out-of-control development is destroying wildlife, green space, watersheds, and scenery.



Support local efforts to control development through better planning.”

On the value of farmland: “We need *productive* farmland. The economic vitality of our community depends on a thriving agricultural sector.”

On the costs of sprawl to taxpayers (see cautionary notes below): “Out of control development is unfair to our communities and families because it takes our tax dollars away from services we need: police, fire department, water systems, schools, and parks. It is unfair for us to be forced to pay for ugly, wasteful, uncontrolled development. Therefore we should (insert action).”

Language to Use When Communicating about Sprawl

This is an inherently local issue. Make your message immediate, local, and personal. Recognize that to most of your audience, “growth” is good. You need to talk about what’s bad about unplanned or harmful growth and what’s good about “smart” or “sensible” growth.

Language that works: good or better planning, balance, heritage, community, open space/green space, *productive* farmland.

Language that doesn’t work: density, cluster development, mixed-use development, neo-traditional development, traditional (means different things depending on where a person grew up), jargon generally.

Language to be careful with: “*Sprawl*” is unclear and not seen as all bad by most people. The word means conflicting things to people. You need to define it in manageable terms, talking about one issue at a time and linking it to uncontrolled development.

“*Diversity*” is appealing for some, not for others, and has connotations relating to social issues.

“*Suburban development*” also has mixed connotations. It suggests loss of individuality to some; to others it offers an opportunity to escape congestion.

“*Better land use*” is not a clear or positive term for many people. It can sound

Sample Sprawl Message



WE'RE GETTING TOO BIG FOR OUR BIRCHES

Development is forever

Every hour, development consumes another 10 acres of land in the Chesapeake Bay region. 10 acres of natural heritage our children won't enjoy. 10 acres that no longer filter pollution before it reaches our rivers and the Bay. 140 acres a day. 1,680 acres each week. An area more than twice the size of Washington, D.C. each year. Contact the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to find out how you can support a better way to grow.



Let's use land wisely.
1-888-SAVEBAY

Source: Chesapeake Bay Foundation

rather technical and bureaucratic, and does not necessarily conjure up images of what people want.

“*Regulation*” implies restriction and a loss of rights. Instead, it may be better to focus on what will be gained by a particular regulation.

“*Subsidies*” are not all seen as bad. People may support subsidies that promote the kind of development they want.

Other Things to Know When Communicating about Sprawl

- Dramatic images and visuals that illustrate recent and projected land use trends are good tools.
- This issue, in particular, can leave people with a sense of helplessness, so it may be very helpful to provide the audience a vision of an alternative future that can lead to healthy, attractive communities. Build coalitions that include farmers and the business community. Focus on policies and solutions.
- Use a place-based focus, emphasizing community health and development. Where possible, involve older suburbs and inner-city activists in anti-sprawl efforts, since they are typically concerned about disinvestment and neighborhood decline. This can also provide you an opportunity to build new coalitions and work with these activists on common concerns.
- Be careful when discussing taxpayer costs: the research shows that this is a hard concept to explain to people, and that not all tax subsidies are seen as bad. When using the cost argument, be specific: talk about fairness and show how the new development hurts the community.
- Likewise, traffic congestion is not one of the most convincing reasons for stopping sprawl. Although people dislike traffic, they can live with it. In addition, curbing sprawl will not necessarily alleviate traffic. It may actually make it worse for a while. Instead, talk about providing transportation alternatives, public transit, more walkable development patterns, etc. Finally, respect your audience’s concerns about privacy and safety.
- Depending on your messages, the best spokespeople on urban sprawl issues may be those whose livelihood or future is compromised by the loss of critical lands. They include the average Joe and Jane concerned about the community, farmers affected by loss of productive lands and their livelihood, and the elderly, who may be able to talk about a time when there was a feeling of community, and what they would like to leave behind.
- Children are good messengers because it’s their future that will be affected, and they can appeal to the emotions of an audience concerned about providing a better life for the next generation.

Issue 2: Protecting Forests

Forests are one of the most important reservoirs of biodiversity—and not just rain-forests. Protecting old-growth and logged forests alike is critical to the conservation of valuable plants and animals. Deforestation, industrial-scale logging, and destruction of ancient forests all contribute to loss of habitat and forest-dependent species. Healthy forest ecosystems are essential sources of fresh water and clean air.

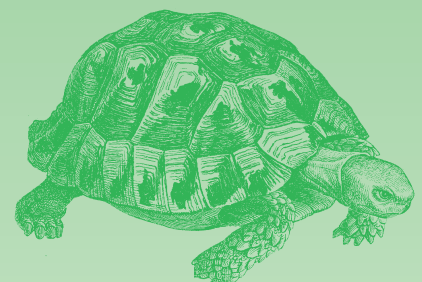
What the Public Knows, Thinks and Feels about Forests

Americans care about forests, at least in the abstract. Polls show consistent concern for forest protection, and high concern about loss of ancient forests, because they are seen as irreplaceable.

- Most Americans know little about forest management and agency jurisdictions. They easily interchange terms like “national forest” and “national park.”
- Most Americans don’t believe that logging is allowed in National Forests.
- Many Americans believe that forests can easily be re-generated after they are logged.
- Americans are generally surprised at how little forest land is permanently protected in parks or designated Wilderness.
- Forest protection requires communicating with audiences, especially urban ones, about a concern not necessarily linked to their everyday lives. You will be attempting to draw the link between destruction of forests that may be miles away with the loss of quality of life. Fortunately, though, most Americans have an appreciation for forests based on their affection for particular trees, woodlots, or larger forest areas they have experienced.
- You are seeking to appeal to the audience’s **key values** of concern for the future and the lives their children will lead, as well as the recreational and spiritual values provided by nature. These include responsibility to family and future generations; personal enjoyment of nature and recreation; respect for God’s creation; the nation’s beauty; and protecting our heritage.
- Audience **concerns** related to forest protection include the loss of ecosystem services that forests provide; the loss of our heritage; concern about individual species that depend on forests; and the loss of attractive landscapes.

Key Concepts to Communicate About Forests

- It’s critical to communicate that **a forest is more than trees**. It is a complex living ecosystem of trees, plants, wildlife, and soil. Forests are cradles of life on land. They provide food, shelter, and habitat for more species than any other terrestrial ecosystem. They clean and restore fresh water, produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide, cycle essential nutrients and build soil.



Sample Forest Message

- The public needs to know that **natural and native forests are best** for a healthy ecosystem. Non-native species can disrupt the dynamics. Industrial forests, clear-cut forests, tree plantations and highly fragmented forests cannot provide the same values and services as natural forests, nor can they support the same diversity of species.



More than half of America's National Forests have already been logged, mined and drilled for oil.

Now President Clinton and Vice President Gore are deciding the fate of the rest.

These are America's Heritage Forests. They are our last 60 million acres of unspoiled, but currently unprotected, scenic forest wilderness.

The Clinton-Gore Administration has promised to protect these lands for future generations.

But the mining, logging and oil industries, and their political allies, are aggressively trying to kill this initiative. There are discouraging signs that these special interests may prevail.

We can't let that happen. The Clinton-Gore Administration must permanently protect every remaining roadless area exceeding 1,000 acres in all of our National Forests.

"The only sure way to sustain what is left of these magnificent forests is to put them off limits to new roads."
New York Times

"The U.S. Forest Service has not come far enough. Americans should demand that [they] protect all National Forests."
Kansas City Star

"The Administration claims to be serious about saving the forests. What it hasn't yet done, unless, in essence . . . is policy as stiff as the steel."
Washington Post

"Craft a permanent policy that protects all roadless areas and ends the giveaways."
Los Angeles Times

"Without backing [from Vice President Gore] the danger is that the Forest Service will yield to demands that these areas be sacrificed."
Boston Globe

"Now is the time to battle [for] permanently protected undeveloped National Forests."
Pittsburgh Post

President Clinton—and especially Vice President Gore—consider themselves friends of the environment. They say they want to leave Americans a "lands legacy."

Why not start by protecting our last National Forest wilderness?

Saving these Heritage Forests, located in 42 states, will be the true test of the Clinton-Gore Administration's conservation legacy.

The American people are watching. And they're smarter than the average bear.



Once They're Gone... They're Gone Forever

Send President Clinton and Vice President Gore a free e-postcard on this issue at www.ourforests.org

An initiative of the Free Choice4Trees, representing nearly 500 U.S. conservation groups, 240 conservation scientists and more than 40 clergy and religious organizations

- Another important concept to communicate is that natural forests are alive at many levels—the subsurface, which supports roots, cycles water and provides nutrients; the surface level, which produces soil from leaf litter and decomposing trees; the understory, where young plants, trees and shrubs live; and the canopy, which is the tree-tops. Every layer is important to forest health.
- Emphasize stewardship; caring for these forests for future generations.
- Stress the natural services/values/benefits that forests provide to people.
- Speak to concerns about how little is permanently protected, and the impact of logging on public lands.

Messages on Forest Protection that Work

The following messages were developed in workshops organized by the Biodiversity Project. We suggest these as jumping off points, to be refined according to your needs and particular audience.

- An **overarching message** is: “Healthy forest ecosystems are complex webs of life important to our own health and enjoyment. They provide clean drinking water, clean air, places to play, swim, hike, fish and hunt. They are habitat for countless plants and animals. Yet logging and development are destroying our forest ecosystems. We can protect our forests for the future and restore what we’ve lost for our children by acting now.” (Specify an action here.)
- Supplemental messages include:

For ancient forest protection: “Ancient forests are the living legacy of America’s natural history. But only 4% of these original forests, home to hundreds of species of unusual plants and rare wildlife, remain. Ancient forests can only be created by God, but they are being destroyed by humans. These special places are threatened with extinction by logging and development. When they are gone, they will be gone forever. We can protect these forests for future generations by acting now.”

For logged forests: “We must work to regenerate forests. A forest is more than trees. It is a complex ecosystem home to countless plants and animals. When forests are cut, trees may grow back, but it takes hundreds of years to re-create a healthy forest ecosystem. Forest ecosystems are being destroyed, and logging and development threaten even recovering forests. To restore healthy ecosystems, forest management must focus on restoring the complex, natural system of trees, plants, wildlife and soils that provide the essential services, like clean water and fresh air, that we all rely on.”

Other Things to Know When Communicating about Forests

- Effective messengers include children, whose world will be altered by our treatment of forests; forest workers; fish and game biologists; clergy; a family discussing with a grandparent how the forest used to be; an angler.
- For some audiences—particularly younger recreationists—you may want to stress the “wild” element of forests, appealing to thrill seekers, backpackers, and cross-country skiers.

Issue 3: Endangered Species

Many people equate endangered species with biodiversity. Species are on the front lines, and have been a focal point of the biodiversity debate in the U.S. and Canada.

What the Public Knows, Thinks and Feels about Endangered Species

- Most Americans are aware of endangered species issues, but they may think of them as a matter of rescuing particular mammals or birds or whales out of compassion.

Sample Endangered Species Message



Source: Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

- One of the challenges with endangered species protection is to expand the foothold established by more than 25 years of publicity—and controversy—about the Endangered Species Act. In other words, you have to expand on what the public has learned through these debates, while correcting misinformation. It is also important to broaden the audience's concern about individual species to embrace the habitats on which wildlife and plants depend. Public opinion research tells us that talking about habitats is more useful in many circumstances than focusing on a specific species, especially if the species is not particularly charismatic.
- The **key values** you are seeking to tap are: responsibility to family and future generations; responsibility to ourselves and God's creation; protection of human health and well-being; enhancement of our quality of life; nature's right to exist.
- **Concerns** of your audience related to endangered species include: worry about diminished quality of life not just in the future, but now; threats to human health that may result from loss of medicinal materials found in nature.

Messages on Endangered Species that Work

■ An **overarching message** is, "We have a responsibility to protect the health of our families and to maintain a healthy environment for future generations. Nature's habitats provide us with clean air and clean water, make our cities livable, give us beauty and recreation, and protect hundreds of species of plants and animals."

"Nature's habitats are a gift of the Creator and they are irreplaceable, but they are being degraded and destroyed, and sometimes lost forever, in every part of the country. Irresponsible development, industrial practices and consumption habits are destroying habitats. In our own community, development has cost [provide a number] acres of habitat. For our own good, we need to stop this destruction. Saving our habitats is a practical way to clean our environment and enrich our lives."

Language to Use When Communicating about Endangered Species

Talk about "balance," both in assuring that habitats and species are protected without unnecessarily intruding on property rights, and in assuring the needs of future generations can be met even as those of current generations are. Point out

that protection of biodiversity and endangered species requires protection of “communities” of plants and animals—habitats—not just individual species, just as human society needs communities to thrive.

Other Things to Know When Communicating about Endangered Species

Appropriate messengers include citizens who adopt local streams or other sensitive habitats. A business owner benefiting from species protection and resulting tourism adjacent to a national park or forest. A cancer patient who benefited from treatment with pharmaceuticals derived from wild plant species. Grandparents, parents, young children concerned about the future.

Issue 4: Wetlands

Wetlands are one of the most threatened habitats in North America, and one of the least understood and appreciated.

What the Public Knows, Thinks and Feels about Wetlands

Communicating about wetland protection requires overcoming negative images about “useless swamps” and drawing direct connections to the benefits that wetlands provide to people. To carve out a new image for a typically unloved landscape, we need to point out the services these hardworking ecosystems provide. The public is only somewhat aware that wetland destruction is an issue, and awareness is higher in areas where wetland controversies have been hot. Many voters believe wetlands are doing slightly better than in the past, but most people are not surprised (or particularly moved) at the rate and extent of wetlands loss.

Key values on wetlands include stewardship concerns related to family and future generations.

Concerns on wetland issues are about health (clean water) and secondarily quality of life (abundant wildlife for future generations, food sources, and recreation). Messages about floods appeal to concerns about safety and security.

ACT NOW TO STOP SPRAWL AND PROTECT WETLANDS!

President Clinton Protect Wetlands

The Clinton/Gore Administration has plans to make it easier for developers to destroy thousands of wetlands, increasing sprawl, pollution and flooding. The Administration has proposed new wetlands destruction permits that would turn today's wetlands into tomorrow's strip malls! These rubber stamp permits would be issued to greedy developers, oil and power companies, miners, and road builders, allowing them to pave over already vanishing wetlands with no public input and without warning neighbors of flood risk.

Wetlands naturally filter out pollution, keeping our lakes, streams and drinking water sources free of sediments and toxic pollution. Wetlands act like large sponges that soak up flood water, and keep our families and homes safe from flooding. Wetlands are home to fish and wildlife.

You can act now to stop sprawl and save wetlands. It's not too late to save our wetlands and our communities!

Learn more by turning this card over. Then help protect wetlands and stop unplanned sprawl. Let President Clinton and Vice President Gore know that you oppose their misguided wetlands destruction program by mailing the attached postcard.

To Protect Clean Water, Habitat and Homes from Floods

For more information, call 202-547-1141 or 608-257-4994

Sierra Club
Wetlands Protection Campaign
222 South Hamilton, Suite 1
Madison, WI 53703

Non-Profit Organization
EPA Partner
0840
Madison, WI
Permit #0000



Sample Wetlands Message

The following message appears on the flip side of the mailer below.

“My name is Doris Wilson and my home was flooded last year after the neighboring developer destroyed a three acre wetland that protected my home from flooding for more than 20 years. The Clinton/Gore Administration gave the developers an easy wetland destruction permit to destroy the wetland without warning me or neighbors about the increased risk of flooding.

Please send president Clinton and Vice President Gore this postcard today to protect your home and family from flooding and to save wetlands.

Developers already destroy nearly 120,000 acres of wetlands each year. If the Clinton/Gore Administration has its way we stand to lose more.”

Source: Sierra Club, Midwest Office

Key Concepts to Communicate about Wetlands

To reach the public, **water quality is the strongest angle**, and local water quality concerns are more salient than abstract federal protection.

Wetland habitats serve as **natural filtration** systems that trap pollutants that settle out of standing water. As a result, wetlands play an important role in providing clean water to people, fish and wildlife alike. Environmentalists tend to split habitat and water quality, and talk about them in separate contexts, because regulatory systems treat them as separate management problems. **But the public understands that clean water is essential to healthy habitat, and linking these two concepts (water filtration/habitat) helps communicate why wetlands are so important.**

On the habitat side of the coin, wetlands are cradles of life—the nurseries and breeding grounds for many species of water birds, fish, shellfish, frogs, turtles and more. Much of the wildlife we enjoy and the seafood we like to eat get their start in a wetland. As an angler’s bumper sticker succinctly states: No Wetlands; No Walleye.

Another human angle on wetlands is flood protection. Wetlands are natural sponges (a wet sponge can soak up more water than a dry one!) and retain rainfall and snow melt and reduce downstream floods. However, this “sponge concept” is hard for people to grasp. Research shows that concerns about flooding tend to be local, and near-term, so don’t use the flood argument if floods don’t happen in your area, or haven’t happened recently.

Messages on Wetlands that Work

- An **overarching message** is, “We’ve already destroyed half of America’s wetlands, and in some places, even more. Wetlands filter and clean our water, and provide unique habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife. They also help prevent floods. We need to conserve and protect wetland habitats so that our children can live in a world with clean water, bountiful wildlife, and natural beauty.”
- Another **sample message** excerpted from a longer message on wetland permits and sprawl developed by the Sierra Club is, “Wetlands naturally filter out pollution, keeping our lakes, streams and drinking water sources free of sediments and toxic pollution. Wetlands act like large sponges that soak up floodwater, and keep our families and homes safe from flooding. Wetlands are home to fish and wildlife. You can act now to stop sprawl and save wetlands. It’s not too late to save our wetlands and our communities.”

Language to Use When Communicating about Wetlands

Emphasize that wetlands provide water filtration AND habitat (two for one!). Stress tough enforcement (of current regulations), not new regulations. Talk about standards, rather than legal protection and federal regulation. Mentioning birds helps stress the habitat angle. Use the term “wetland habitat.”

Effective Images for Wetlands Issues

Wetlands can indeed be beautiful, and not every wetland looks like another. A mangrove swamp doesn't look much like a prairie pothole or a salt marsh. At the local and regional level, use photos of local wetlands, and put people in the picture whenever possible—fishing, birding, boating, etc., to overcome the image of a hostile and scary place. At the national level, take advantage of the variety—the array of beautiful wetlands, to show how diverse and special these ecosystems and habitats are.

Appropriate Messengers for Wetlands Issues

Effective messengers can be people whose lives and livelihoods are directly linked to wetland conservation, such as coastal fishermen. From the flooding perspective, flood victims who understand the link between their experience and wetlands destruction can be very effective.

Opposing Views on Wetlands

The way we look at wetlands depends on our perspective. Many farmers dislike wetland regulation because it imposes on their individual choices on how to manage their land. Agribusiness organizations have routinely opposed wetland protection. For developers, wetland protection is a small regulatory hurdle to overcome on the way to major profits in the real estate market. Their messages have attempted to raise public concerns about “burdensome regulation,” “government bureaucracy,” and “loss of choice.” These messages appeal to values such as freedom, and concerns such as too much regulation. In recent years, wetland protection opponents have invoked the “Takings” issue and raised reduction of individual property rights as the concern.

When the public is faced with messages that draw upon conflicting values—freedom vs. future generations—it makes choosing a particular course of action more difficult. This is one reason the wetlands regulatory debate has been so protracted.

Issue 5: Rivers and Watersheds

What the Public Knows, Thinks and Feels about Rivers and Watersheds

Survey and focus group information collected by River Network suggests the public is largely unaware of the significance of rivers as sources of drinking water, and is not automatically familiar with the meaning of the term “watershed.” But relatively simple maps and illustrations quickly communicate the role of rivers and their drainage systems in services such as drinking water that people value highly.

Equally important, strong majorities believe water quality regulation has not gone far enough; almost half of those who say regulation has gone too far in general reverse themselves when the question has to do with clean water. These are important points to keep in mind as you develop communications strategies.

The most important **key values** to keep in mind when promoting biodiversity



messages related to rivers and watersheds are:

- Quality of life and protection of personal and family health;
- Responsibility to family, community and future generations.

The most important **concerns** of your audience on rivers and watersheds are protection of public health from pollutants; stress the tangible, immediate benefits of protection. Benefits to future generations are important but should not be communicated alone.

Messages on Rivers and Watersheds that Work

Here are some suggested potential overarching messages:

- “Taking steps to improve the quality of water in our polluted river will lead to healthier drinking water for you and your family.”
- “Our river adds so much to our quality of life. All of us in the community have a responsibility to keep it clean and beautiful for ourselves and future generations.”

Supplemental messages below may be appropriate for your strategy, depending on local circumstances.

- **For Women:** “Uncontrolled development is polluting the _____ River and threatening our families. We need to urge our local officials to make responsible land-use decisions and protect our community from pollution.”
- **For Businesses that Have a Stake in the Community:** “The _____ River is polluted to levels unhealthy to you, your employees and others in the community. Let’s get our local leaders to make more responsible decisions about development before we have to invest in expensive technologies to make the river healthier.”
- **For Newcomers to a River Basin:** “If the beauty of the _____ River is part of what brought you to this community, let our local leaders know you expect them to protect that quality of life for you and future generations.”

Language to Use When Communicating about Rivers and Watersheds

Language that works: health; drinking water; checks and controls on development; responsibility; standards to protect the quality of water. When talking about problems affecting a river or watershed, use the generic term “pollution.” It is the common language people use to describe the various elements of watershed degradation.

Language that doesn’t work: “watershed” is not a term with which most Americans are familiar; talk about a specific river’s drainage area. “Riparian” should be avoided; talk instead about property abutting the stream or its banks. “Non-point pollution” baffles people. Talk instead about rain water flowing across the land and washing chemicals, soil or animal wastes into a river.

Key Audiences for Biodiversity

Our ultimate audience is everyone. We want every American to care about biodiversity issues and to act to conserve biodiversity. But research helps us target our work, focusing on audiences that are especially important either because of their size or because they can be persuaded to play a greater role in biodiversity conservation.

Audiences Identified by the Biodiversity Poll

The 1996 Biodiversity Poll identified eight population clusters with distinct attitudes about biodiversity. Each of these clusters has specific demographic and lifestyle characteristics that can help us determine what kinds of messages will reach them, and where we can find them (which helps us determine where to place our messages). By identifying the reasons why different groups in society would care about biodiversity, advocates will be better equipped to craft persuasive messages on saving species and habitat.

For example, if we are trying to reach a sympathetic audience to generate phone calls to a local representative, we may want to target the first cluster (the pollsters call them “national bio-connectors”). This segment of the population responds well to messages that talk about our responsibility to protect the planet for future generations and an appreciation of nature’s beauty. They are our members, and engage in outdoor activities more than the other groups. This tells us that we can reach them through direct mail or other organizational literature, or through brochures, displays or interactive presentations at local parks, zoos or gardening centers.

Among the poll’s eight population clusters, support for biodiversity conservation was solid among two segments of the public, totaling 23% of the population. The “middle” three clusters (34% of the population) were sympathetic to biodiversity, but their commitment to the issue was not nearly as strong as for the first two groups. The remaining 43% of the population is found in three other clusters, which are the least likely to support biodiversity protection. The pollsters have given each cluster a short name that tries to encompass the key characteristics of that group.

“It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Overarching Message Themes

While there are particular messages that have special appeal to specific clusters, the polling analysis reveals some common message themes that have broad appeal across the eight segments.

These themes are highly resonant, and should be used, among all groups:

- Describe the human health consequences of biodiversity loss;
- Emphasize the importance of habitats as nature's tools for cleaning our air and water;
- Appeal to a sense of responsibility to save the earth for future generations; and
- Engage the need to protect a healthy environment for our families.

As we describe each cluster, we will highlight particular messages that are important to that segment of society. The clusters are briefly profiled below, and in the chart at the end of this chapter.

Most Likely Supporters of Biodiversity

As the most environmentally-minded, the National Bio-connectors and the Patriotic, Local Bio-connectors naturally feel more strongly than others about the impact of the loss of biological diversity. Here is a look at these two groups and the messages that resonate best with them.

National Bio-connectors (8%)

People in this segment belong to national and international environmental groups, and are educated, affluent and engaged in society. This group expresses strong support for environmental causes. More than all other segments, they value nature's right to exist, appreciate nature's beauty, and feel that a healthy environment is important for their own productivity. They are the most familiar with the term biodiversity, and are the most likely to disagree that the world would not suffer without unpopular species, such as mosquitoes and poison ivy. The National Bio-connectors exhibit a high level of participation in society. Most of them vote, and many contact their elected officials. They go to national and state parks and zoos, and they enjoy outdoor activities like hiking and gardening. The National Bio-connectors are likely to be members of your organizations and to already be active on environmental issues.

Patriotic Local Bio-connectors (15%)

This group was defined by allegiance to local and state environmental groups,

political moderation, and community involvement (through school age children). They also enjoy outdoor activities, go to zoos and aquariums, garden, are the most regular TV news watchers, and also read newspapers and use computers. The patriotic value—protecting “America’s natural resources” is important to this group. While they support maintaining biodiversity, they are less sure about saving all species. As with the National Bio-connectors, the Locals are likely to be members of your organizations and may already be active on environmental issues. They should be easy to identify in your communities and educated about the value of saving biodiversity.

Message Themes for “National Bio-connectors” and “Patriotic, Local Bio-connectors”

- Appeal to a sense of responsibility to save the earth for future generations; to these groups, it may matter less what specific piece of information one provides to demonstrate the impact of the loss of species and habitat and more that the information speaks to our responsibility to protect the earth for future generations.
- Describe the loss of old forests and recreational areas;
- Warn about losing the possibility of finding new medicines from nature in the future;
- Describe the lost places in nature;
- For the Patriotic, Local Bio-connectors, appeal to the value of protecting “America’s” natural resources and natural beauty.

Sympathetic/Persuadable Groups

The following three groups have some similarities and some differences when it comes to their attitudes about biodiversity and the best ways to think about communicating to them.

Young Cross-country Skiers (5%)

This is a small, but distinct group. All of them—100%—cross country ski. Most also engage in other physical outdoor activities, such as hiking and biking. Most are under 40 years old, and the group is largely male, and more educated, affluent and Republican than other younger segments of the public. They use computers and the Internet, and are newspaper readers. They are not particularly concerned about environmental issues (or other issues for that matter) but they do tend to be frequent voters.

Message Themes for “Young Cross-country Skiers”

- Appeal strongly to the sense of responsibility to protect nature for future generations;
- Warn about losing the possibility of finding new medicines from nature in the future;
- Talk about the loss of recreational areas and wild places that we enjoy.

Alone Agains (15%)

This group is defined by marital status. All are divorced, widowed or separated. Predominantly women (69%) and older (60% over 45), this group also has the lowest incomes. While not outdoor sports enthusiasts, most have visited a park or museum in the last year. They are the most likely group to watch TV news regularly. This group values protecting the environment for future generations and family, but places high value on God’s creation and the beauty of nature. While they believe we should prevent extinctions, a majority believe it is OK to eliminate some species, and they are willing to place jobs ahead of environmental concerns. Communications to this group must take into account their economic fears and their religious values.

Message Themes for “Alone Agains”

- Place the importance of a healthy environment for our families front and center;
- Include a recognition that nature is God’s creation and humans should respect God’s work, and an appeal to a sense of responsibility to save the earth for future generations (keep in mind that messages related to religious values should be delivered by appropriate spokespeople);
- Show how protecting biodiversity can save jobs in industries like fishing and tourism;
- Emphasize environmental threats to water quality, as Alone Agains are particularly worried about clean water;
- Describe the loss of old forests and recreational areas.

Disconnected Singles (14%)

This group is defined by the highest proportion of single Americans (95%), and by its relative youth (92% are younger than 45). This group is slightly more male (57%) and is less affluent than most other segments. Three in 10 are members of minority groups—more than any other segment. This group is also distinguished

by its lack of participation in politics. Many do not vote, or only vote infrequently, and are the least likely to have written a letter to the editor or to have volunteered for a political party or candidate. This group is unlikely to regularly read a daily newspaper.

They enjoy going to beaches and lakes (89%), parks and to a lesser extent, zoos and museums. They are concerned about the environment, but only about half (51%) consider maintaining biodiversity very important. This is an important “persuadable” group for biodiversity.

Message Themes for “Disconnected Singles”

- Combine an appeal to responsibility to protect the earth for future generations with a strong recognition that nature is God’s creation and humans must respect God’s work;
- Describe the folly of eliminating potential future discoveries of new medicines from nature;
- Decry the loss of old forests, because we need to preserve the special ecosystems that can never be replaced.

Least Likely Supporters of Biodiversity

Disconnected Religious Conservatives (14%)

This group is clustered around a convergence of religious involvement, political conservatism and lack of engagement in public affairs. It has a large proportion of Born Again Christians (44%). This group contains more women (63%) and tends to be older and less educated than other segments. This group is the least active in society, and 21% are not registered to vote. It is the least likely group to pursue outdoor recreation or belong to environmental groups. Forty-seven percent attend religious services weekly and a majority listen to talk radio. Environmental concerns are lower for this group than others. They do care very much about pollution and development wiping out jobs, as well as the loss of ecosystem services and the dangers of toxics, but they are reluctant to place a high importance on maintaining biodiversity.

Message Themes for “Disconnected Religious Conservatives”

- Place the value of nature as God’s creation up front in communications;
- Secondly, emphasize protecting the environment for one’s family;
- Highlight threats from pollution and the loss of habitats that clean air and water;
- Describe how maintaining biodiversity will save jobs in fishing and tourism;
- Use messages that link jobs and health to biodiversity—these are the most likely ways to get their attention.

Disconnected Outdoorsmen (14%)

Unlike their fellow outdoorsmen who are more connected to society and who most likely fall in the first two clusters, this group of hunters (95%), anglers (87%), and campers (70%) is defined by its lack of participation in politics and church. Of the group, 31% are not registered to vote, and 75% attend church only infrequently, or less. Even so, they express a strong belief in nature’s connection to God. While they care about the environment, it isn’t a high priority, and they are more likely to agree that not all species are worth saving. Losing places to swim or to hunt and fish concerns these outdoorsmen more so than many other segments of the population.

Message Themes for “Disconnected Outdoorsmen”

- Combine an appeal to responsibility to protect the earth for future generations with a strong recognition that nature is God’s creation and humans must respect God’s work;
- Emphasize the loss of places in nature that are used for recreation—fishing, hunting, swimming, or camping.

Engaged Property Owners (16%)

This group is comprised of married (91%) homeowners (87%) who tend to be (but are not all) upper income families. It includes a considerable block of professionals (36%) and is predominantly Republican. These are frequent voters (88%), and they are engaged in public affairs. Their gardens may be a primary connection to nature, as 76% of this group gardens. They are computer users (61%) and church goers 51%. God’s creation, future generations and family anchor environmental concerns, but this group gives less priority to environmental issues than all other clusters. Maintaining biodiversity is not an important concern for this group.

Message Themes for “Engaged Property Owners”

- Combine recognition that nature is God’s creation and humans must respect God’s work with an appeal to responsibility to protect the earth for future generations;
- Describe local places in nature that are being lost; use this group’s connection to their gardens to build appreciation for biodiversity.

Other Key Audiences

The clusters identified in the biodiversity poll demonstrate how discreet segments of society hold different priorities and concerns relating to biodiversity. For instance, these clusters remind us that not all women, or young people or highly educated people are alike in their attitudes. However, when you lack resources and time to identify highly specific audiences, it may be necessary to communicate more broadly. In the course of our work, the Biodiversity Project has focussed on three broad audiences that we believe will be important to communications efforts on biodiversity: women, young adults and people of faith.

Women

Research shows that women are consistently more sympathetic to environmental protection than men (although men tend to know more facts about the environment). The opportunities for outreach to female audiences are limitless: women’s organizations and networks; women’s magazines; television programs aimed at women; the Lifetime cable channel; and through opinion leaders and cultural icons. Imagine Martha Stewart devoting an entire issue of *Living* to biodiversity—organic gardening techniques and recipes, non-toxic house paints, etc.! The Project hopes to pursue new research on women’s attitudes on biodiversity in the near future. We hope the findings will provide new insights in how to reach this important audience.

Young Adults

Young people, whether urban singles or outdoor athletes, are developing attitudes and values that will most likely stay with them for the rest of their lives. They’re also developing habits and behaviors—shopping, voting, donating, etc.—that will last a lifetime. In communicating with young adults, it’s helpful to connect environmental protection with values such as human health and well-being and future generations. Be wary of overdoing

	National Bio-connectors (8%)	Patriotic local Bio-connectors (15%)	Young Cross-country Skiers (5%)	Alone Against (15%)
Description	Highly educated Professional Upper income Highest proportion of Democrats	Most likely to have school-aged children Higher income Political moderates	Young, white, males Professional College graduates Highest proportion of Republicans	Older women Lowest income Higher proportion of Democrats
Values widely held	Family Future generations Nature's beauty American resource	Family Future generations Nature's beauty American resource	Family Future generations	Family Future generations Nature's beauty God
Dominant values	Future generations	Future generations American resource	Future generations	Future generations God
Profiles and characteristics	Support environmental organizations Frequent voters	Most likely to contribute to local and state environmental organizations Frequent voters	Least likely group to value nature's connection to God Frequent voters	Divorced, widowed, or separated
Attitudes	Strong supporter of biodiversity Most likely to rate environment as top priority Value nature's right to exist	Strong supporters of biodiversity Most likely to rate cutting government spending as top priority	Most likely to agree that it is okay to eliminate some species Low priority given to a number of concerns	Most concerned about water quality Most likely to believe that jobs are more important than saving habitat
When to find them	State or national parks and zoos Dependable recyclers Bird watchers, hikers, gardeners Call in to talk radio shows	Zoo, aquarium goers Bird watchers, and gardeners Regular TV news watchers, newspaper readers, computer users	Very active—ski, hike, bicycle Computer and internet users Read the newspaper	Watch TV news Likely to recycle
Messages	Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Old forests Recreational areas	Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Old forests Recreational areas Places in nature	Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Medicine	Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Old forests Jobs Recreational areas
Message strategy	Link message to responsibility to protect the earth for future generations	Link message to responsibility to protect the earth for future generations	Link message to recreation and stewardship	Link message to economic considerations and religious values

Disconnected Singles (14%)	Disconnected Religious Conservatives (14%)	Disconnected Outdoorsmen (14%)	Engaged Property Owners (16%)
Young, single Earns under \$35k/year Higher proportion of African Americans and Hispanics	Women Less educated Elderly Churchgoers Highest proportion conservatives, Born-again	Rural Blue collar Males Least educated	Married Upper income Professionals Higher proportion of Republicans
Family Future generations Nature's beauty	Family God Future generations	Family Future generations God Nature's beauty Personal use American resource	Family Future generations
Future generations God	God Family	Future generations God Family	God Future generations
Less likely to participate in politics or to vote Least likely to read a newspaper	Least active politically or recreationally	Least likely to participate in politics or go to church	Frequent voters Church-goers
Strong supporters of Endangered Species Act	Jobs more important than saving habitat Environment is a low priority Concerned about water quality	Low concern for environmental issues Higher priority to improving the economy Most unaware of term biological diversity	Least support for maintaining biodiversity Environment is lowest priority Jobs more important than habitat
Pay attention to popular culture	Listen to talk radio shows	Hunting, fishing, camping Beaches and lakes	Own a home and like to garden Read newspapers regularly and use computers
Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Medicine Recreational areas Old forests	Eco-system services Toxic/Birth defects Jobs Places in nature	Toxic/Birth defects Eco-system services Recreational areas	Toxic/Birth defects Eco-system services Places in nature
Link message to stewardship and nature as God's work Key is motivating them to act	Link message to jobs and threats to health	Link message to losing places to hunt and fish	Link message to backyard biodiversity and protection of family

the messages. This audience grew up with television and does not trust hype: they are looking for substance and facts. They are getting their news from alternative weeklies, TV news or the Internet. Other places to reach them include rock concerts, sporting events, singles events, campus newspapers and radio, and sports and music magazines. For more information, contact the Biodiversity Project office for a copy of our Young Adults Working Group Summary.

People of Faith

Many Americans believe that nature is God's creation. These beliefs provide a powerful, underlying motivation for environmental concern and action. Because religious and spiritual values underlie environmental concerns for so many Americans, outreach to people of faith can link us to important allies in our efforts to save biodiversity. The challenge is to find language and messages that can speak to these widely held values, but that does not alienate particular beliefs and perspectives. We can't rely on the mass media to reach this audience. We must engage in more personal, one-on-one outreach. For more information, contact the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (212/316-7441), the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (212/684-6950 x.213), the Center for Respect of Life and the Environment (202/778-6133) or other groups working in this arena. You can also request a copy of the Biodiversity Project's guide on outreach to spiritual communities.

Conclusion

This handbook and your work are built on the optimistic view that successful communication on biodiversity issues will unite rather than divide people—that the logic of mutuality ultimately appeals to something deep within us all.

But neither your communications work nor the cause of biodiversity conservation itself can rely simply on the belief that the issue alone will compel people to act. We hope you recognize and act on the value of learning to know, respect, and speak meaningfully to your audience.

We hope you find the advice in this handbook useful in the important work you do. Your concern, coupled with good information and effective communications skills, gives biodiversity at the local, state, national and global level a fighting chance.

“Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprinciples present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.”

—Theodore Roosevelt

Biodiversity Communication Resources

Biodiversity Project Resources

Biodiversity Education Summit Proceedings, a conference convened by the American Museum of Natural History, World Wildlife Fund, and the Biodiversity Project at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, June 24-26, 1998.

Biodiversity Project Advisors Forum Overview and Summary, a meeting convened by the Biodiversity Project, Washington, D.C., March 30-31, 1998.

Engaging the Public on Biodiversity: A Road Map for Education & Communication Strategies, the Biodiversity Project, August 1998. An analysis of and recommendations for raising public awareness about biodiversity.

Regional Meeting and Working Group Summary Report, messages and summaries from the regional workshops and message development working groups (water quality and aquatic habitat, endangered species, forest ecosystems, and sprawl) convened by the Biodiversity Project, February, 1998.

Spirituality Working Group Report and Summary, a working group convened by the Biodiversity Project, Madison, WI, March 3-5, 1999.

To Effect Change: A Green Paper on Communications Training and Capacity Building for the Environmental Movement, the Biodiversity Project, June, 1999. A profile of the Biodiversity Training Collaborative and its initiatives.

Young Adults Working Group Report, a working group convened by the Biodiversity Project, Germantown, MD, June 16-17, 1999.

For additional Project resources, refer to our Web site: www.biodiversityproject.org

Other Good Handbooks

Communications

Bonk, Kathy, Griggs, Henry, and Tynes, Emily, *The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*, a publication the Communications Consortium Media Center, published by Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1999.

To order a copy for \$27.95 plus shipping, contact:
Jossey-Bass Publishers
350 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94104
(800) 956-7739

River Talk! Communicating a Watershed Message, River Network, Washington, D.C., 1998.

To order a copy for \$15, contact:
River Network
520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1130
Portland, OR 97204-1535
(503) 241-3506

Education and Outreach

Windows on the Wild: Biodiversity Basics: An Educators Guide to Exploring the Web of Life,

World Wildlife Fund, published by Acorn Naturalists, Tustin, CA, 1999.
To order a copy for \$39.95 plus shipping, contact:
Acorn Naturalists
17821 East 17th Street, #103
Tustin, CA 92780
(800) 422-8886

Sierra Club Grassroots Organizing Training Manual, Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1999.
For more information, contact:
Sierra Club
85 2nd Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5500
www.sierraclub.org

Books and Resources on Biodiversity and Communications

Baskin, Yvonne, *The Work of Nature: How the Diversity of Life Sustains Us*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997.

Brower, Michael, and Leon, Warren, *The Consumers Guide to Effective Environmental Choices: Practical Advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists*, NY: Three Rivers Press, 1999.

Dailey, Gretchen, ed. *Nature's Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997.

Grifo, Francesca and Rosenthal, Joshua, *Biodiversity and Human Health*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997.

Herndl, Carl and Brown, Stuart, eds., *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Kaplan, Steven, *Being Needed, Adaptive Muddling and Human-Environment Relationships*, Environmental Design Research Association, pp. 19-21, 1990.

Kempton, Willett, Boster, James, and Hartley, Jennifer, *Environmental Values in American Culture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

Perlman, Dan and Adelson, Glenn, *Biodiversity: Exploring Values and Priorities in Conservation*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Suzuki, David, with McConnell, Amanda, *The Sacred Balance*, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998.

Takacs, David, *The Idea of Biodiversity: Philosophies of Paradise*, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Wilson, Edward O., *Biophilia*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Wilson, Edward O. *The Diversity of Life*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Public Opinion Research Firms with Experience on Environmental Issues

Belden Russonello & Stewart
Research and Communication
1320 19th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-6090
Fax: (202) 822-6094
E-mail: brs@brspoll.com
Contacts: John Russonello, Nancy Belden, Kate Stewart

Peter D. Hart Research
1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 234-5570
Fax: (202) 232-8134

Lake Snell Perry & Associates
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 776-9066

Fax: (202) 776-9074
Contact: Celinda Lake

MacWilliams Cosgrove Smith Robinson
1150 17th Street, NW, Suite 604
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 887-9201
Fax: (202) 887-9233
Contact: Matt MacWilliams

The Mellman Group, Inc.
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Suite 520
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 625-0370
Fax: (202) 625-0371
Contact: Kristin Webb

R/S/M
Research/Strategy/Management Inc.
20 Courthouse Square, Suite 208
Rockville, MD 20850
(301) 610-7470
Fax: (301) 3610-7519
Contact: Ron Hinckley

Talmey-Drake Research and Strategy, Inc.
100 Arapahoe, Suite 1
P.O. Box 1070
Boulder, CO 80306
(303) 443-5300
Fax: (303) 447-9386

Research Firms in Canada

Damn Good Productions Ltd.
3867 W. 27th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6S 1R4
Contact: Ken Coach
(604) 222-3743
Fax: (604) 222-3743

Manifest Communications
117 Peter Street, 3rd floor
Toronto, Ontario M5V 2G9
(416) 593-7017
Fax: (416) 591-7793

E-mail: ideas@manifestcom.com
Contact: Janice Nathanson

MarkTrend Research Inc. (Canada)
600 East Tower City Square
555 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5X 3Z7
(604) 664-2400
Fax: (604) 664-2456
Web site: www.marktrend.com

Strategic Communications Inc.
Campaign Communication & Fundraising
Consultants
3 Macdonell Avenue, Suite 301
Toronto, Ontario M6R 2A3
(416) 537-6100
Fax: (416) 588-3490
E-mail: strattor@stratt.com
Contacts: Bob Penner, Gideon Forman,
Deanna Bickford
Western office: 1 Alexander Street, Suite 400,
Vancouver V6A 1B2

Viewpoints Research Ltd.
900 W. Hastings Street, Suite 702
Vancouver, BC V6C 1E5
(604) 683-6631
Fax: (604) 683-0049
E-mail: vpoints@pro.net
Web site: www.viewpointsresearch.com
Contact: Steven Bengtson

Viewpoints Research Ltd.
115 Bannatyne Avenue, Suite 404
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0R3
(204) 943-9253
Fax: (204) 947-9262
E-mail: viewpoints@awnet.com
Contact: Ginny Devine, Partner

Public Opinion Resource Centers

National Opinion Research Center
University of Chicago
1155 East 60th Street

Chicago, Illinois 60637
(773) 753-7500
e-mail: norcinfo@norcmail
www.norc.uchicago.edu/homepage.htm

The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research
University of Connecticut, U-164
Montieth Building
341 Mansfield Road, Room 421
Storrs, CT 06269
(860) 486-4440
Fax: (860) 486-6308
Website: www.ropercenter.uconn.edu

Media, PR and Advertising Firms

AdBusters Media Foundation (primarily television)
1243 West 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V6H 1B7 Canada
(604) 736-9401
Fax: (604) 737-6021
E-mail: adbusters@adbusters.org
Web site: www.adbusters.org

Douglas Gould and Company
1865 Palmer Ave.
Larchmont, NY 10538
(914) 833-7093
Fax: (914) 833-7094
Web site: www.douglasgould.com
Contact: Doug Gould, President

Green Team Advertising, Inc.
33 Howard Street
New York, NY 10013
(212) 966-6365
Fax: (212) 966-6178
E-mail: greenads@aol.com
Web site: www.greenteamusa.com
Contact: Hugh Hough, President

Public Media Center
466 Green Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 434-1403

Fax: (415) 986-6779
Contact: Herb Chao Gunther

Pyramid Communications
1000 Lenora St., Suite 415
Seattle, WA 98121
(206) 625-6939
Fax: (206) 625-0652
E-mail: pyramid@pyramidcom.com
Web site: www.pyramidcom.com
Contact: John Hoyt, President

Sustain: The Environmental Information Group
920 N. Franklin St., Suite 206
Chicago, IL 60610-3121
(312) 951-8999
Fax: (312) 951-5696
E-mail: jim@sustainusa.org
Web site: www.sustainusa.org
Contact: Jim Slama, President

Third Eye (primarily California)
A Division of Stoorza, Ziegus & Metzger
Home Savings Tower
225 Broadway, 18th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 236-1332
Fax: (619) 236-0683
E-mail: Camille_Sobrian@szmi.com
Web site: www.stoorza.com
Contact: Camille Sobrian, Vice President & General Manager

Media Associations and Organizations

Communications Consortium Media Center
1200 New York Avenue, NW, #300
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 326-8700
Fax: (202) 682-2154
E-mail: kbonk@ccmc.org
Contact: Kathy Bonk

Earth Communications Office (ECO)
12021 Wilshire Blvd.

P.O. Box 557
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 656-0577
Fax: (310) 656-1657
Web site: www.OneEarth.org
Environmental Media Association (EMA)
10780 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 20
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 446-6244
Fax (310) 446-6255
E-mail: ema@epg.org

Environmental Media Services
1320 18th Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 2003
(202) 463-6670
Fax: (202) 463-6671
E-mail: chris@ems.org
Contact: Chris Decady
Website: www.ems.org

Communication Consultants and Trainers

Communications Consortium Media Center
1200 New York Avenue, NW, #300
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 326-8700
Fax: (202) 682-2154
E-mail: kbonk@ccmc.org
Contact: Kathy Bonk

Valerie Denney Communications
407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1150
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 408-2580
Fax: (312) 408-0682

Douglas Gould and Company
1865 Palmer Ave.
Larchmont, NY 10538
(914) 833-7093
Fax: (914) 833-7094
Web site: www.douglasgould.com
Contact: Doug Gould, President

Environmental Support Center (for referrals)
4420 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 2
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 966-9834
Fax: (202) 966-4398
E-mail: jabernathy@envs.org
Contact: Jim Abernathy

Institute for Conservation Leadership
6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 420
Tacoma Park, MD 20912
(301) 270-2900
Fax: (301) 270-0610
E-mail: toicl@aol.com
Contacts: Diane Russell, Peter Lane

Safe Energy Communication Council
1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 805
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 483-8491
Fax: (202) 234-9194
E-mail: seccgen@aol.com
Web site: www.safeenergy.com
Contact: Scott Denman

Sheehan & Associates
1901 L Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 452-9440
Fax: (202) 776-0891
Web site: www.sheehanassociates.com
Contact: Michael Sheehan

Strategic Communications Inc.
Campaign Communication
& Fundraising Consultants
3 Macdonell Avenue, Suite 301
Toronto, Ontario M6R 2A3
(416) 537-6100
Fax: (416) 588-3490
E-mail: strattor@stratt.com
Contacts: Bob Penner, Gideon Forman,
Deanna Bickford
Western office: 1 Alexander Street, Suite 400,
Vancouver V6A 1B2

Training Resources for the Environmental
Community (TREC)
P.O. Box 134
Burton, WA 98013
(206) 463-7801
Fax: (206) 463-7801
E-mail: dro@trencw.org
Web site: www.trencw.org
Contact: Dyan Oldenburg

Organizations and Projects that Provide Communications Training for their Own Leaders and Allied Organizations

Americans for the Environment
1400 16th Street, NW, Box 24
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 797-6663
Fax: (202) 797-6563
E-mail: dbarry1@fore.org
Contact: Dan Barry

Clean Water Action
4455 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite A300
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 895-0432
Fax: (202) 895-0438
E-mail: lthorp@cleanwater.org
Contact: Lynn Thorp

Clean Water Network
1200 New York Ave., NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 289-2395
Fax: (202) 289-1060
E-mail: knemsick@nrdc.org
Contact: Kathy Nemsick

Green Corps
29 Temple Place
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 426-8506
Fax: (617) 292-8057
E-mail: samuelrich@aol.com
Contact: Leslie Samuelrich

National Audubon Society Wetlands Campaign
P.O. Box 462
Olympia, WA 98507
(360) 786-8020
Fax: (360) 786-5054
E-mail: nstevens@audubon.org or
lmitchell@audubon.org
Contact: Naki Stevens or Lea Mitchell

River Network
4000 Albemarle Street, NW, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 364-2550
Fax: (202) 364-2520
E-mail: lraisbeck@aol.com
Contact: Liz Raisbeck

Sierra Club Training Academy
85 2nd Street, 2nd floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5500
Fax: (415) 977-5799
E-mail: emily.mcfarland@sierraclub.org
Contact: Emily McFarland

Western Organization of Resource Councils
2401 Montana Ave., Suite 301
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 252-9672
fax: (406) 252-1092
E-mail: billings@worc.org
Contact: Pat Sweeney