Sierra Club

Grassroots Organizing Training Manual

SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

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This manual is dedicated to

Alita Wilson

Robbie Cox

Mike Arnett

— the "three musketeers" of the Project Act/Training Task Force — in deep gratitude and appreciation for their hard work and dedication towards grassroots activism at the Sierra Club. Their vision and inspiration has fostered a "back to the roots" movement that continues to strengthen all of our efforts to protect the environment.

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DESIGN: JOHN BYRNE BARRY

Introduction

Congratulations! You've taken the first step. You've opened this manual and taken a look inside. Now, what can we do to keep your attention? How about this — if you use this manual, we guarantee that you will design and run much more effective grassroots organizing campaigns in your community, and thereby, make valuable contributions to preserving our planet for future generations. Aha! Now that we have your interest piqued, we're ready to begin.

Why This Manual Was Developed

One of the most important investments we can make in the future of the Sierra Club is to provide our activists with the skills, information, and savvy they need to become more successful grassroots organizers. Over the past several years, our opponents' methods of manipulation have become increasingly sophisticated, insidious, and well-funded. In order to combat their attempts to destroy our precious environment, our activists must be armed with the best training possible.

To achieve this objective, in 1997 the Sierra Club launched an exciting new program called the Sierra Club Training Academy (SCTA), which offers intensive workshops in grassroots organizing to interested members throughout the country. Instead of passively taking notes during a seemingly endless series of lectures, SCTA participants are actively engaged in the learning process through a challenging simulation exercise. Working together in teams on a mock campaign, the activists learn how to build stronger organizations, define achievable goals, develop compelling messages, attract media attention, organize in their communities, and secure victories. This innovative, experientially based approach to training has proven to be highly effective at equipping participants with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the increasingly complex political arena.

This manual has been developed to complement our new training program, and is being provided to all of the participants of the SCTA, as well as numerous other activists around the country who have yet to attend these sessions. Since the workshops are only a couple of days long, the training program addresses the fundamental precepts of grassroots organizing, and then focuses primarily on how to use the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix in your campaign planning process. However, this manual provides more in-depth information, so that you can expand beyond the matrix and create a more comprehensive written campaign plan for your real work out in the field.

How To Use This Manual

Unlike many documents of this nature, this training manual is constructed in a linear fashion, taking you step-by-step through the organizing process. We therefore strongly recommend that you read this book front to back, rather than randomly flipping to various chapters, in order to maximize its educational value. Even if you have already done a substantial amount of grassroots organizing on behalf of the Sierra Club or other organizations, this manual will provide you with valuable information about the Club's most up-to-date methods of campaign planning, which we believe will greatly enhance your approach to effecting change.

We begin with an introduction to the Sierra Club's philosophy and culture of grassroots organizing, explaining *why* we do it (chapter 1), including the key organizational development issues involved with any organizing effort (chapter 2). Next, we will move onto a discussion of *what* planning a campaign entails, including how to run a planning meeting, using the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix (chapter 3). Finally, we provide instruction on *how* to complete the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix, and then use it to develop a complete campaign plan (chapters 4–9).

All Sierra Club members across the country are strongly encouraged to follow the precepts of this manual in planning and running any grassroots organizing campaigns on environmental issues. These are the principles, skills, and methods Sierra Club activists from around the country have used to run high-profile, successful conservation campaigns, and that we as a national organization will use to ensure public policies that protect our environment — for our families, for our future.

The Power of Grassroots Organizing

Why We Must Organize

There are two sources of power in the political process: money and people. Since we will never be able to match the financial resources of our opponents, the Sierra Club must garner its power through recruiting, training, and mobilizing citizen activists. It's not enough that the Sierra Club supports policies that are in the best interest of our environment. It's not enough that those policies have the support of the vast majority of the American public. Our power is derived from our ability to organize the public on behalf of these policies and exert influence over decision-makers. What we have seen in the closing years of the 20th century is a huge battle of "organized money" generated by anti-environmental corporations versus "organized people" who support protecting America's environment.

As we look to the next century, the Sierra Club must be even more sophisticated and more aggressive in organizing people around a pro-environment agenda. The Sierra Club's continued political power and prestige in defense of the environment rests with our ability and commitment to build a stronger and more powerful organization, capable of more effectively empowering and mobilizing citizen activists. Through grassroots organizations like the Club, people can take power in the political process.

In the effort to take power in the political process it is our goal to improve our ability to plan and execute winning campaigns. Webster's New World Dictionary defines a *campaign* as "...a series of (military) operations with a particular objective" or "...a series of planned actions." Implied in the term campaign is first and most importantly being clear about your goal, your demands, what it is you want to win. In addition, the term campaign implies a series of connected events over a period of time, each of which builds the strength of the organization and brings it closer to victory.

A campaign should be waged to win a victory — pass a bill, defeat an initiative, elect a pro-environmental candidate to office. When you win a campaign, people should receive something they did not have before. Someone who has power agrees to do something they previously refused to do.

Gaining and exercising power to win on an environmental issue is the purpose of organizing any grassroots environmental campaign. By effectively mobilizing large numbers of people, we can have an impact on public policy, gain political power, and build the Sierra Club into a stronger, more effective organization. The key component to success in any organizing campaign is planning. A good planning effort should not be a "solo" effort but should involve a group of people who are committed to the success of the campaign and who have a key role in the campaign's success.

Defining Grassroots Organizing

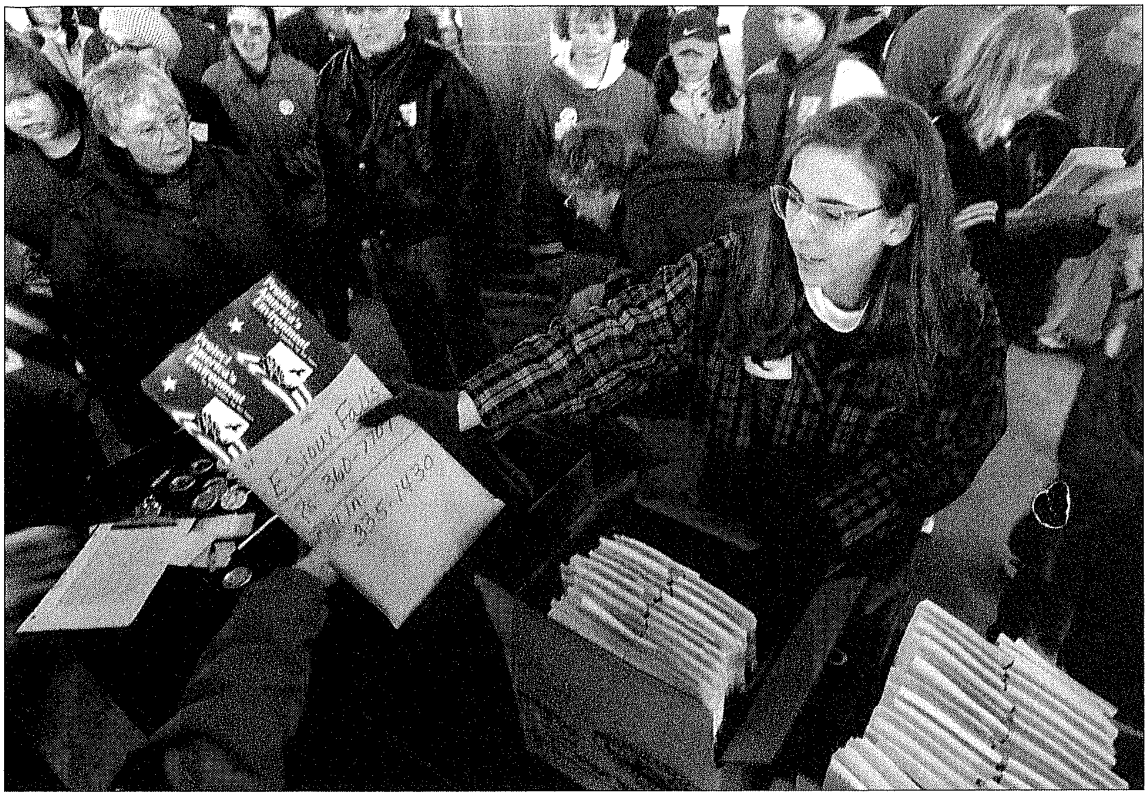
In the Sierra Club, we define "grassroots organizing" as the process of identifying, training, and mobilizing large numbers of citizen activists to get involved in the political struggle to protect America's environment.

Grassroots organizing, therefore, is about going to the very source of democracy: the people. It is about figuring out how they feel, and what their self-interest is. It is about listening to their needs, communicating in words they understand, caring about making a real, tangible difference in their daily lives. To be an effective organizer, you must always remember that, first and foremost, it is about people.

The practice of grassroots organizing is probably best illustrated by a story that has been handed down from organizer to organizer over the past several decades, and involves one of this nation's premier organizers for social justice, Cesar Chavez, the late president of the United Farm Workers (UFW). It happened during the famous UFW-led lettuce and grape boycotts of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The story goes that a young organizer working with the UFW had the opportunity to spend some time with Chavez one afternoon, and decided to ask him, "What is the secret to success in organizing?" Chavez responded, "The only way I know how to organize people is to talk to one person, then talk to another person, then talk to another person."

Developing an effective grassroots organizing culture, tradition, and political operation in the Sierra Club builds on that notion espoused by Chavez, and multi-

LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM/ARGUS LEADER



Cold Morning in South Dakota: In Sioux Falls, Kjersten Larson passed out packets of doorhangers to volunteers for distribution throughout the community. More than 130 volunteers assisted in this 1996 outreach event — in a city with 87 Club members.

plies it across the country. Grassroots organizing is nothing more than building political strength by empowering large numbers of people to affect public policy through their involvement in the political process. Within the Sierra Club, involving citizen activists in the political process has always been our strength — a strength we cannot take for granted, and one that needs constant "care and feeding."

Types of Grassroots Organizing

There are many different kinds of grassroots organizing campaigns. There are election campaigns, in which you might be responsible for organizing Sierra Club members for the passage or defeat of a ballot initiative. There are lobbying campaigns, in which activists are mobilized to make appeals to elected officials on behalf of the passage or defeat of a particular piece of legislation. There are regulatory reform campaigns, in which troops are gathered to testify before appointed governmental bodies in favor of environmental protections. And, finally, there are issue advocacy or public education campaigns, to organize community support around a local environmental issue. Regardless of what type of campaign you are engaged in, the same basic principles of planning and organizing apply.

The Three Principles of Effective Organizing

Saul Alinsky was a well-known community organizer in Chicago who wrote a number of organizing books and was a teacher and inspiration to generations of organizers. Among his many contributions to progressive organizing in this country, Alinsky taught that there are three basic principles of organizing that all grassroots organizing campaigns should be guided by.

□ Win Real, Immediate, and Concrete Improvements in People's Lives

Sierra Club grassroots campaigns should be about more than just "educating the public" about environmental issues. Although public education may be an important component of the campaign, it should not be the campaign's primary goal. Focus on securing tangible victories — stopping a toxic waste dump from being constructed in the neighborhood, getting asbestos out of the local schools, improving the quality of drinking water, etc. Identify the problems people face in their lives, and come up with practical solutions that are achievable.

□ Re-align Power Relationships by Building a Strong and Effective Organization

The fact that the Sierra Club has been in existence, well-funded, broadly-supported, and well-respected for over 100 years has forever changed the power relationships in this country. Anti-environmental corporations, polluters, and other "bad guys" have not advanced their agendas as far as they might have liked because the Sierra Club has stood up and fought back. But we need to continue to increase our resources and political power to ensure that decision-makers will continue to take heed. This will only happen as a result of careful, strategic planning, and a commitment to integrating specific organizational development goals into each and every one of our grassroots campaigns. We should always come out of a campaign stronger than we went into it.

□ Empower People to Become Active and Effective in the Political Process, and in Their Communities

As organizers, developing and nurturing new leaders is a fundamental element of our work. We must always maintain a respect for the values, talents, and skills of our volunteers foremost in our thinking and planning. Our goal as Sierra Club organizers is for people to learn to use the tools of democracy to protect our environment. Solid training is the foundation from which we build people's skills, confidence, and, ultimately, our organization.

The Three Phases of a Sierra Club Grassroots Organizing Campaign

Winning campaigns depends on three critical phases. First, we need to engage the community in its desire to protect a place or quality of life that it values — the local beach, the air children breathe, the nearest national forest, etc. It is not enough for people to merely agree with these noble goals; they need to get involved in demanding action to achieve them. We need to "create demand" for environmental protection. Second, we need to demonstrate that politicians and anti-environmental corporations will respond to community demand if, and only if, the community holds them accountable. It is not enough to merely denounce special-interest politics; we have to mobilize the community to action. In other words, we need to demonstrate accountability. And third, we need to work directly with our leaders and our institutions to devise and implement solutions to the problems. We need to "take delivery." These three steps — creating demand, holding leaders accountable, and taking delivery on the solution — are each essential to winning victories.

The vast majority of Americans support environmental protection. Our challenge is to translate that passive support into active participation.

We must carry them out in this order. We cannot take delivery from decision-makers unless they already think the public will hold them accountable for listening to the special interests instead of the public. We cannot hold decision-makers accountable unless the public is already actively demanding this environmental protection. So we must first create demand, then demonstrate accountability, and, finally, take delivery on our victory.

Phase 1: Creating Demand

To be successful in our grassroots organizing efforts, we need to create demand for environmental protection through public education. We know that the vast majority of the American public supports our positions on virtually all of the environmental public policy initiatives we rally public support behind. Poll after poll clearly demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of Americans consider themselves environmentalists. The challenge, therefore, is to translate this passive support into active participation. This requires publicizing a direct and current threat to a precious natural resource that will motivate people to demand that it be protected.

At the Sierra Club, we have achieved tremendous success in this area by creating local "stories" to dramatize pressing environmental problems, utilizing the

BILL BATSON/OMAHA WORLD HERALD

Small Pigs for Small Farms: At a 1998 rally in Nebraska, farmer and Club leader Bob Warrick held "Babe" and spoke out against mega-hog operations.

media to communicate our message, and providing simple, accessible ways for citizens to get involved with effecting a solution. These Sierra Club stories have the basic characteristics of a fairy tale: a person or place in distress (a victim), a person or entity that is causing that distress (a villain), a person or group of people who comes to the defense of the victim(s) (a hero), and an opportunity for a positive resolution through taking action. For instance: "The Callous Corporation (villain) is dumping toxic chemicals into the Rambling River, and poisoning the drinking water supply in our community (victims). The citizens of Johnsboro (heroes) must take action now and rescue this important resource (plot resolution)."

One of our most successful efforts at creating demand through such stories was the Earth Week Mobilization of 1995. During that week, the Sierra Club organized 10,000 volunteers to hang 2 million doorhangers in 100 cities around the country. Each doorhanger had two postcards, which the family could fill out and send back (one to President Clinton, and one to a local decision-maker), telling a local story of a community at risk from an environmental threat, and demanding action to resolve that problem. The rate of return was overwhelming. In most direct-mail campaigns, it is astonishing if just 1 percent of the recipients take action. In this case, however, as many as 15 percent of the families in some communities sent in their postcards.

Why was this mobilization so successful? First, the issues were clear, concise, and connected to the community, engaging residents in a conversation about issues of direct concern to them. Second, the action required was easy and straightforward. Finally, recipients knew that a neighbor had taken the time to deliver this message, which connected them to others and helped compel them to engage in the effort.

□ Phase 2: Establishing Accountability

Once you have worked to create a demand for action among the general public, your focus must then turn to the decision-makers and how to involve the public in holding them accountable for meeting that demand. Accountability entails both thanking leaders who do the right thing, and criticizing leaders who do the wrong thing.

Here is how political scientist Eric Schulzke described the impact of the Sierra Club's accountability work on swing Republican members of the House of Representatives in 1996:

> *"The Republican retreat was a compound of individual decisions to fight or flee, one vote after another. Terror grew as the rank and file became convinced that the party line was not resonating at home, while their opponents' message was. From the outset, environmentalists sought to induce this terror. The Sierra Club envisioned a 'drumbeat' that would make Congress reverberate, through the media, from experts and administrators, from colleagues, and most importantly from home.*
>
> *The drumbeat proved to be an apt metaphor. More than one congressional staffer used that precise term in interviews. 'It just didn't stop,' said an aide to a Midwestern Republican who backed down on the EPA riders after being overwhelmed at home. Many felt that national and local media sniped at Republican proposals night after night. Staffers reported that the environmental message 'hit a chord' at home, reflected not only in phone calls and mail, but also at town hall meetings and in feedback from Republican stalwarts.*
>
> *Members varied in their reaction to this pressure, even when similarly vulnerable. Some stiffened their resolve and lashed out. Some of these, like Jim Longley (Maine) and Randy Tate (Washington) would be defeated in 1996, while others would barely survive."*

□ Phase 3: Taking Delivery

Finally, the end result in a successful grassroots organizing campaign is to "take delivery," or to bring about change, to get things done. In taking delivery, you have successfully put pressure on the central campaign target(s). That target has decided to grant your demands. You may take delivery in many different arenas. Delivery is taken when you:

pass a new general plan or zoning ordinance
defeat a proposed toxic waste incinerator
pass a bond act to support mass transit
defeat a member of the city council
get a corporation to clean up one of its factories
block a bad bill in the state legislature or Congress
designate a new wilderness area
win a lawsuit
implement a recycling program at the local university

In other words, taking delivery is the payoff. It's the "endgame" in chess. It's reaping the harvest in farming. It's signing the contract in business. It's the victory that makes all of your hard work worthwhile.

Taking delivery is about three things:

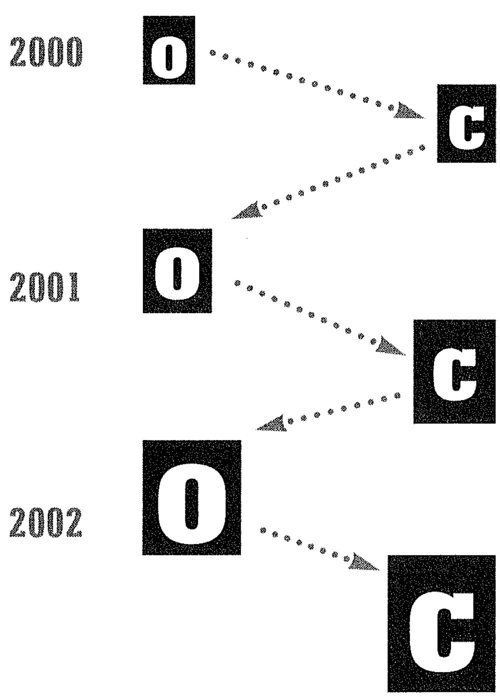
- ☐ choosing an appropriate, meaningful, and achievable conservation goal
- ☐ targeting the key decision-makers — those who have the power to deliver and can be reached through the creation of demand and accountability activities
- ☐ building good working relationships with those targets — thanking supporters, being persistent with (but also respectful of) your opponents, and investing considerable time and effort into the "persuadables"

The Importance of Planning

In the following chapters, we will take you step-by-step through the planning process. We will give you the information and tools you need to design and run grassroots organizing campaigns that can win immediate, concrete victories for the environmental movement.

Building an Effective Organization

The success of the Sierra Club as North America's premier environmental organization will increasingly depend on the strength of the Club's grass-roots chapters and groups. With each conservation campaign that a Sierra Club chapter or group undertakes, the organization should emerge from the effort stronger, larger, wiser, and more visible in your community than when you began. As a chapter or group grows, it will be in a position to take on even more ambitious, sophisticated campaigns, and build itself up further. Here's a diagram to illustrate this cycle.



Each year, the organization ("o") grows stronger and is therefore able to take on a bigger campaign ("c") the next time, which leads to creating an even stronger organization, and so on.

Conservation campaigning or issue advocacy, and organizational development, therefore, should not be viewed as two separate tracks within the Club's operations, but rather as integrated, interdependent links in the same chain. In this chapter we address the pressing organizational concerns that you need to keep foremost in your mind while developing grassroots organizing plans to ensure that your "o" continues to grow.

Maximizing Your Valuable Resources

The three key resources for building a bigger and healthier organization are: people, money, and connection. The first two are fairly obvious; the concept of "connection" is slightly more elusive. It refers to all of the intangible things that connect the people to the organization: a common vision; the money, effort, and/or skills they contribute; time spent together; a sense of responsibility, appreciation, and/or empowerment; shared trials and tribulations, etc. It is the glue that holds everyone together. Too many organizations, including the Sierra Club, neglect this particular resource. But understanding, nurturing, and maximizing the sense of connection people feel to an organization is just as essential as recruiting new members or raising money.

It is important to note that the concept of connection is not just limited to internal relationships within one chapter. It is about the relationships to other chapters and groups, as well as to the national organization. It is also about external relationships — such as contacts with other community organizations, coalition partners, the media, potential donors, business leaders, and elected officials — that translate into an organization's overall reputation, image, influence, efficacy, and long-term sustainability.

We as organizers should always strive to come out of a campaign stronger than we went into it. Any campaign that breaks an organization — wearing out its volunteers and staff, and depleting its treasury — is a *failure*. Resources must be strategically allocated not only to maximize the efficiency of your immediate effort, but to increase long-term viability. A political campaign is a finite organization that can afford to "go for broke," since the entire operation will be dismantled after Election Day. However, the Sierra Club is an ongoing organization that needs to be strengthened by each effort, so it can continue to fight future battles in its long-term war against polluters and other anti-environmentalists.

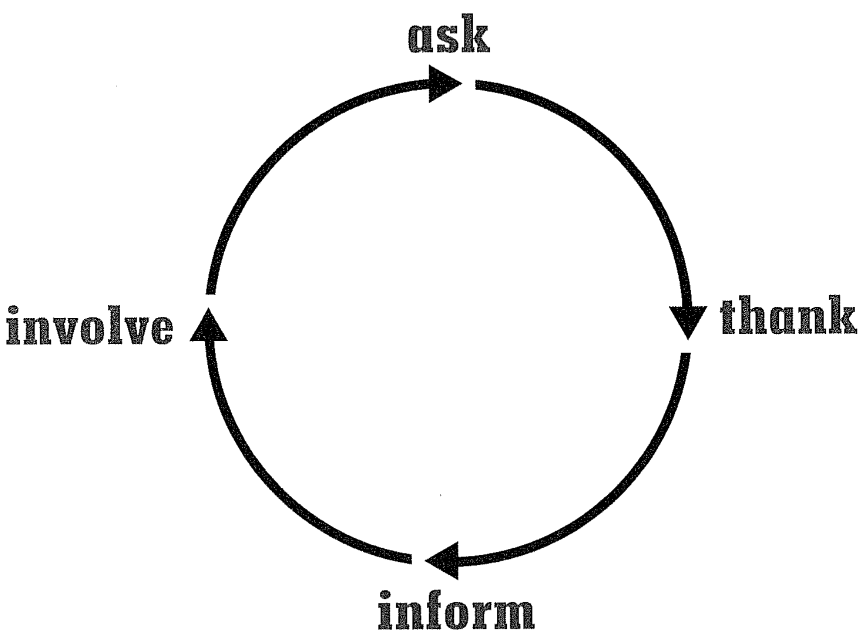
Of the three key resources, the most important is *people* — the lifeblood of the Sierra Club. Since we will never have the financial resources our opponents have, we must always cherish, nurture, train, and inspire our volunteers and donors.

The Organization-Building Cycle

You may strengthen connections within the organization and maximize your human resources by doing four simple things:

- ask
- thank
- inform
- involve

Churches across the country successfully complete this cycle every time they hold a service. Think about it. The sermon informs the congregation. The prayers and hymns involve them. The collection plate asks them to make a contribution. The clergy thanks them for coming. Then, the same cycle is repeated the following week.



As a Sierra Club leader, you should be actively incorporating the organization-building cycle into all of your grassroots organizing campaigns. Every interaction with a donor or a volunteer should include each element of the cycle. (The cycle may not always start with "ask" and the order may vary depending on the activity.) Here's how it works.

- ☐ **Ask**

Know what you need — then ask for it.

Establish early contact with prospective volunteers and donors, and then maintain consistent and regular communication. Create opportunities for Sierra Club members and neighbors to be involved.

Get to know who your volunteers and donors are. People volunteer and donate for all sorts of reasons. Potential volunteers might want to enhance their resumé, make new friends, learn a new skill, etc. Once you have gauged their self-interest and skill set, tailor your request accordingly. (People who are outgoing and personable should be staffing phonebanks or leafleting at community events, while shy folks might be more comfortable working behind the scenes.) Potential donors might be looking for a way to feel important in the community, address an issue they feel strongly about, or support the good work that they have heard the Sierra Club does.

Provide a menu of activities with a range of time commitments to choose from, so volunteers can pick something that fits their individual situations.

Offer a variety of ways that a potential donor can donate money.

Research the potential giving capacity of the donor before you ask.

Always ask volunteers to assist with a set of clear, specific, and urgent tasks, rather than merely asking for "some help."

- ☐ **Thank**

The two words "thank you" are the most powerful motivational words in a volunteer organization. Use them not just once. Not just twice. Thank your volunteers and donors as soon as they agree to help, then each and every time they give their time or money. Again, they are the lifeblood of your campaign, and without them your plan could not succeed.

Let volunteers know they make a difference and that their efforts are appreciated.

The rule of thumb for a major donor is to thank them seven times for their donation.

Send a hand-written thank-you postcard after every relevant event. Let volunteers and donors know the results of their work or their donation. Include press clippings or summarize the campaign on a fact sheet.

Hold a party for the volunteers after the event. Bring information about your next event.

Any campaign that breaks an organization — wearing out its volunteers and staff, and depleting its treasury — is a failure.

□ Inform

Don't toss volunteers into the deep end of the pool without any instructions or the skills they need to be successful, and then be amazed when they sink.

Take the time to really talk with volunteers and donors.

Tell volunteers and donors about the issue and how it affects them personally.

Explain not only the immediate task at hand, but how it fits into the bigger picture, so that they have a context for what they are doing and giving, and will feel more connected to the overall effort.

□ Involve

The best way to involve folks is to have specific, concrete tasks identified in your grassroots campaign plan. Assign those tasks to specific volunteers.

Once someone has agreed to volunteer or donate, the next step is to ensure that the experience will be a positive one for that individual, something that makes her feel fully engaged in the organization.

Give volunteers a clean, pleasant, and safe environment in which to work. Be positive and enthusiastic.

Invite donors to activities and events that show them how their money is being spent.

Help volunteers feel welcome and at ease. If you are facilitating a meeting with new people in attendance, make sure they are introduced and included in the discussion. Create an environment that is fun and inclusive.

Don't recruit new people to attend administrative business meetings.

Match campaign volunteers' tasks with their skills and interest.

Match campaign donation requests with the donors who identify or feel strongly about the campaign issue.

Provide volunteers and donors with a sense of empowerment and ownership in the decision-making process.

Take note of particularly strong leaders, and encourage them to take on more responsibilities.

Here's a specific example of the organization-building cycle at work. Let's say you are planning an Earth Day rally.

Five weeks before the event: You send out a mailing to your members (to inform).

Three weeks out: You call them (to ask and involve).

After the conversation: You send a postcard to confirm their commitment (and to thank them).

Two days before the rally: You call again, to reconfirm their attendance (and to thank them again).

On the day of the rally: You have speakers (to inform), chants, songs and activities (to involve), and sign-up sheets and donation envelopes (to ask for help).

After the rally: You send out more postcards (to thank them), including more information and asking them to get involved with your next event.

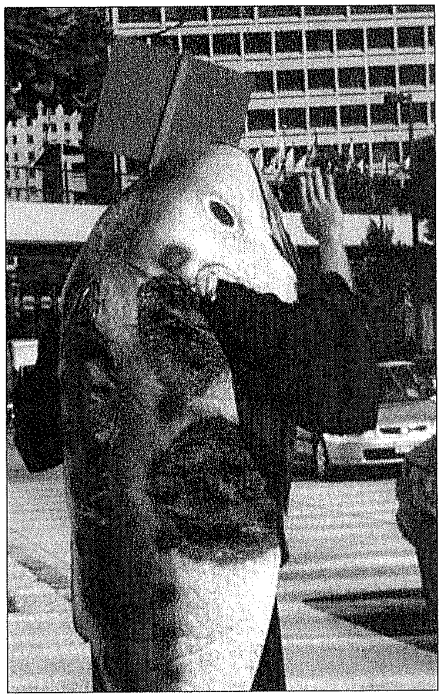
With every event you do, you should keep this cycle foremost in your mind, ensuring that all four steps are fully integrated into the process.

The Importance of "Backwards Planning"

The principal constraint all organizations face is time. The challenge for leaders is to maximize their resources — money and people — within the constraints imposed by time. Therefore, successful time management necessitates the practice of "backwards planning." This is when you set a deadline in the future, assess what steps are needed to accomplish your goal by that date, and plot tasks along a timeline backwards from the deadline at realistic intervals in order to determine at what point you will need to begin.

LLOYD B. CUNNINGHAM/ARGUS LEADER

NANCY DAVIS



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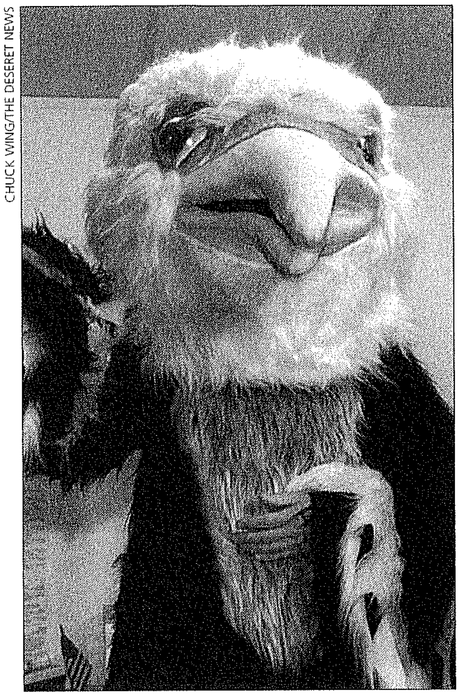


For example, let's say that you have set a campaign goal of making 5,000 get-out-the-vote (GOTV) calls to identified supporters between Friday, October 31, through Tuesday, November 3, regarding a ballot initiative. You would need to get out a calendar and plot out step-by-step, moving backwards from Election Day, each of the tasks involved, including when to order voter contact lists, recruit volunteers, secure phones, make follow-up reminder calls to volunteers, etc. Chances are that, through this process, you would discover that you need to start your work on this project by no later than October 1. If you didn't have all of this written out well in advance, you might end up glancing at the calendar one week before the election to suddenly realize that it's too late to meet your goal. Careful backwards planning and strategic time management are essential to running an efficient organization that is capable of running successful grassroots campaigns.

Animal Farm: Dressing up as an animal — endangered or otherwise — is usually good for grabbing attention. Pictured above, costumed activists campaigned against hog factories in North Carolina, "bird-dogged" an anti-environmental candidate in Maryland, and spoke out for endangered species protection in Utah.

Developing Your Leadership Skills

One of the organizational goals of the Sierra Club is to continually develop new environmental leaders throughout the country. Grassroots organizing campaigns provide an excellent opportunity to achieve this goal. Throughout the campaign, you should be working to enhance not only your own leadership skills, but also to train, encourage, and nurture other members to realize their leadership potential.

The following is a brief list of some of the qualities of leadership you should be working to develop in both yourself and others throughout any grassroots organizing effort you engage in for the Sierra Club:

□ Self-Knowledge

To quote Polonius in *Hamlet:* "To thine own self be true." To lead, you must know how you are most effective and in what areas you may need help from others. Posturing will only get you so far. An honest, sincere appraisal of your individual strengths and weaknesses helps develop such critical skills as the ability to delegate tasks, assume authority only when appropriate, and instill confidence in those being led.

Each leader should develop a management style that is right and comfortable for herself and fits her particular personality. It is also important to note that leadership style may need to be adjusted, depending upon what is required at any given moment. For instance, when things are going badly in a campaign, you may need to serve as the team's "head cheerleader," providing a morale boost to keep the troops' spirits up. The next week, however, the team may be growing too complacent and lazy, and you may need to put on your drill sergeant's hat to get them moving again. Leadership involves being able to assess current situation needs and rising to those occasions.

□ Good Listening Skills

To be an effective grassroots organizer, you will need to develop insights into how human beings think, feel, and behave. By honing excellent listening skills, you can better assess what makes people tick, and what will be persuasive to different individuals. "Active listening" requires patience, sensitivity, and empathy. Most of all, it requires dedication, time, and practice.

□ A Keen Understanding of Group Dynamics

A diverse group of individuals working together toward a common end will invariably involve some level of tension. Even when given job titles and defined responsibilities, individuals tend to assume different roles based on their own ambition level, interests, ego, insecurities, etc. What hostilities arise when this occurs? What happens when one participant does not meet assigned obligations? Which individuals tend to get listened to, and which are alienated — and why? A good leader has the ability to "step outside the circle," see what is happening within the group, and help navigate others through these minefields of human emotions.

☐ Effective Communication

Successful leadership also requires solid rhetorical skills. To move others, you must possess an ability to make a cohesive, effective argument, both orally and in writing. You must be able to clearly articulate what you expect from people, solicit information from others in an efficient and expeditious manner, and mediate peaceful resolutions when conflicts arise.

☐ Critical Thinking

In this age of information overload, your ability to ask the right questions, select exactly what data is relevant, assess the credibility of various sources, weigh conflicting information, and determine how to use that information most effectively has never been more challenged. In the frenetic world of politics, efficient information management, analytical thinking, and sound judgment are essential to maintaining focus. High ideals are what launch a campaign; pragmatism, hard work, and a healthy dose of skepticism are what help you win one.

☐ Organization Skills

It may be mundane and tedious, but establishing deadlines, tracking progress, and maintaining meticulous records are all vital to success. As a leader, you are responsible for not only keeping yourself well organized, but also ensuring that the rest of the team stays on top of things. Keep the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle foremost in your mind, and integrate it into everything you do. Hold regular meetings, establish goals and deadlines, and monitor the progress of others. Wallpaper your workspace with color-coded charts and graphs and checklists. Set up defined systems of communication, accessible files, regular routines, etc. Every minute invested in these types of activities at the beginning of your campaign will pay off tremendously down the road.

☐ The Ability to Make a Decision

Sierra Club members, like most progressive-thinking individuals, tend to want to make as many decisions as possible by consensus. This inclusive decision-making model is highly recommended during the initial planning process to enhance the quality of choices, ensure buy-in from all participants, and solidify a common vision. However, when you are in the midst of actually implementing a plan, making every decision by consensus is impractical, as it is far too laborious and time-consuming. A good campaign manager can determine when other opinions need to be solicited and when to be autocratic and keep things moving.

☐ Giving and Receiving Constructive Feedback

Although nobody enjoys hearing criticism, it is sometimes necessary during the course of a campaign to air grievances, in order to enable the team to work more harmoniously together. A talented leader will create a safe and comfortable environment where individuals are encouraged to communicate their feelings openly and honestly, rather than allow them to fester and perhaps undermine the team's efficiency. The leader should establish ground rules for providing feedback, ensuring that it is given in a constructive and sensitive manner. The feedback should be phrased so that it focuses on how a particular behavior by another individual made the speaker feel, rather than merely attacking someone's character. (For example, instead of saying: "You are dominating this conversation!" — one should try saying something like: "When you interrupt my sentences, I feel like you are devaluing my contribution to the discussion.")

☐ Having Faith in People and (the small "d") Democratic Process

In the Sierra Club, our strength and power comes from people. As leaders, we must respect and have faith in people. We must believe that our volunteers have valuable insights and knowledge to bring to the organization and our campaigns, and that we rely on their contributions to make a difference. By working together, we know we can and will be successful in the political process.

☐ Encouraging Others

Finally, the sign of a truly accomplished leader is one who puts the task at hand before his own ego. This involves delegating authority, boosting other people's confidence levels, and sharing the credit. Always be on the lookout for "rising stars" so you can help pass along the torch.

Unfortunately, leadership is not something you can glean from a book or a lecture. It is something that is developed over time through hands-on, practical experience, and by learning from your mistakes.

Reaching Out to Non-Club Members

Former Maryland Chapter Conservation Chair Larry Bohlen says that in successful conservation campaigns we should spend at least half of our time talking to people who are not currently Sierra Club members — neighbors, friends, allies, and people influential in the community. Your chapter or group cannot grow if

SCOTT PEGG

Honkman: Members of the British Columbia Chapter's Lower Mainland Group tried to get a reaction from motorists during a protest in front of a Shell gas station in Vancouver.

you spend all of your energy talking to each other. In order to increase Sierra Club membership, augment financial resources, and fortify future political efficacy, we must all actively invest considerable effort to reach out beyond the converted and forge new ties.

Building Coalitions

Along those lines, every Sierra Club chapter or group should constantly be looking for new ways to develop and strengthen its relationships with other organizations in the community. Grassroots organizing campaigns provide an excellent opportunity for building such coalitions. By identifying, contacting, and forging partnerships with other organizations, your group or chapter will broaden its perspective, enhance its credibility, and expand its resources.

Think about who else might have a stake in your issue(s), and reach out to them. You may end up building some interesting alliances — perhaps with the National Rifle Association on issues that affect hunters, with communities of color fighting against polluting industries in their neighborhoods, with small family farmers who have an economic interest in going after large agribusiness operations. Building these types of bridges will invariably bolster your efforts.

The Qualities of an Effective Organization

Again, every campaign a Sierra Club chapter or group undertakes should leave it bigger and stronger than it began. The following is a list of some of the qualities we are striving for — attributes we would like you to keep in mind as you launch the planning process for any type of campaign. An effective organization:

- ☐ is held together by values
- ☐ is driven by a mission
- ☐ identifies and establishes clear, quantifiable goals
- ☐ uses the organization-building cycle to strengthen itself
- ☐ reaches out and recruits
- ☐ communicates on a consistent basis
- ☐ supports and nurtures
- ☐ attracts resources (people and money)
- ☐ attracts diverse people with diverse skills

Wouldn't it be a joy to be a part of such an organization? Picture it. Then work hard to make it happen.

CHAPTER 3

The Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix

The backbone of any well-run campaign is the ability of its leaders to come together and create a strategic campaign plan and to stick to that plan once it has been created. In order to assist chapters, groups, and coalition partners in their effort to devise winning campaign plans, we are providing the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix. We strongly suggest that you use this matrix for all your campaigns. This recipe will allow you to pull all of the key ingredients together to ensure that the dam is defeated or that the highway is not built or the open space is protected. It would not be an overstatement to say that you should view this matrix as the founding fathers viewed the U.S. constitution.

As your group or chapter addresses each of these subject areas and answers all of the questions raised below, you will be working together to shape a campaign plan. Defining the issue focus, goals, strategic targets, and message at the initial meeting is the essential first step to create a comprehensive document that will guide your entire grassroots effort. (The subsequent chapters of this manual provide additional information about each element of the matrix, and should be reviewed thoroughly before convening your planning meeting.) You will find an outline of this matrix on page 29. It is critical that you start at the beginning of the matrix and work through it in order.

1. Issue Focus

What is the main issue focus of your campaign? What environmental problem are you seeking to address? How does it relate to the Sierra Club's national conservation priorities?

2. Campaign Goals

A. Conservation Goals

What are the short-term, interim, and long-term conservation goals of your campaign? What exactly do you want the public to demand and the decision-makers to deliver? What will you deem a *victory?* How will you quantify your success?

B. Organizational Goals

What are the overall organizational goals of your campaign? How will this campaign help strengthen your chapter or group? How will this campaign recruit and develop new activists? How will you involve Sierra Club members in the campaign? How will you quantify your success?

3. The Lay of the Land

A. Organizational Strengths and Weaknesses

It is critical to do an honest assessment of your organizational strengths and weaknesses. What resources do you have? What resources do you need?

What are the current strengths or organizational resources that your chapter or group can bring to this campaign? Think in terms of people, money, time and connections.

What are the current weaknesses or organizational needs of your group or chapter as you launch this campaign?

B. Allies and Opponents

It is important to figure out your friends and enemies in this campaign.

Which special-interest groups or community organizations, in addition to the Sierra Club, are likely allies in this campaign? Who shares your campaign goals?

What are their strengths and weaknesses? What resources can they bring to this effort?

Which special-interest groups or community organizations are likely opponents of your efforts? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What will they do or spend to oppose you in this campaign?

4. Strategy

A. Strategic Vehicle

How will you win? In what political venue do you hope to accomplish your conservation goals (pass a bill, change a regulation, win an election, etc.)?

B. Targets

☐ Decision-makers (primary targets)

Which individual or group of individuals has the power to deliver your conservation goal? Who will make this decision? Which specific individuals will you target to secure victory?

☐ Secondary targets

Which prominent individuals in your community can help you influence your targeted decision-makers? Who can you enlist to help you influence their decision? How might their involvement impact this effort?

☐ Public audiences

Who among the general public, outside of the Club membership, are you attempting to reach with your message through this campaign? Who are your most likely supporters among the community at large? Who will help you create demand for this victory? Think in terms of geography (counties, towns, neighborhoods, etc.), demography (women 25–40, men over 60, African-Americans, etc.), and constituencies (hunters and anglers, soccer moms, etc.).

5. Campaign Communication

A. Message/Slogan

What is the central message you plan to deliver through this campaign? Draft one clear, concise, and compelling phrase (10 words or less) that will be reiterated throughout all of your campaign communication to summarize your position.

B. Story

What is the story you will tell to communicate with your targets? Who is the villain? Who is the victim? Who are the heroes? What is the problem? What is your proposed resolution? In just a few compelling sentences, tell the story of your campaign.

C. Media Outlets

Which specific media outlets will be most effective in communicating your message and story to your targets and public audience(s)?

6. Tactics and Timeline

What actions (tactics) will your campaign take to put pressure on your target(s), to get them to grant your goals/demands? What specific activities do you intend to undertake? What will you do to ensure the media covers your issue? In what sequence/order will you implement your tactics? When exactly will you do each activity? Remember to use a variety of tactics to create demand (i.e., get folks involved in the campaign), establish accountability (i.e., hold your targets accountable for their actions), and take delivery (i.e., have your targets take the action you have demanded).

7. Resource Management

A. Campaign Budget

How much will this campaign cost? Once you have assessed your organizational resources, the resources your allies bring into the campaign, and the cost of implementing your tactics, create a campaign budget.

B. Donor Management/Fundraising

If your expenses are greater than your financial resources, ask yourself whether you need to pare back your campaign effort, or how you intend to raise the additional revenue needed. If you choose to raise funds, who will you raise money from? How will you incorporate the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle?

C. Volunteer Recruitment and Stewardship

Reviewing your tactics and timeline, how many volunteers will you need to execute this campaign? What are your plans for recruiting, training and supervising your volunteers? How will you incorporate the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle? How will you use this campaign to strengthen your volunteers' sense of connection to the Sierra Club?

There is an old organizing adage: "If it ain't written down, it ain't a plan." It is not enough to merely discuss what you are going to do; it must be written, copied, and shared with core campaign coordinators. The written plan embodies the team's shared understanding of the campaign's organizational and conservation goals, message, and strategy. It sets forth the campaign's priorities. It defines how resources will be allocated. It serves as a vital compass for all future activities. Trying to run a campaign without a plan is like trying to sail a ship without a rudder. And when trying to navigate your way through the rocky waters of politics, that approach will inevitably lead to disaster.

The point of a written plan is to provide direction and focus for the entire team throughout the duration of the campaign. As we like to say in the world of politics:

"Soon" is not a date.
"Some" is not an amount.
"Someone" is not a name.

How Planning is Usually Done

This is how political consultant Joel Bradshaw describes it. If you have ever worked on any type of campaign before, the following scenario will probably sound very familiar to you. A group of people is gathered around a kitchen table. Everyone is busily discussing what needs to be done. Here is what is said:

We should have a booth at the county fair.

But we'll need a brochure to pass out.

What colors should we use on the brochure?

It is at this point that the meeting comes to a grinding halt while the entire planning team spends the next two hours debating the campaign colors.

This is not a planning meeting. This is a bunch of people working together on a "to do" list. There is no discussion of goals, research, targeting, strategy, or message. This is just a brainstorming session on tactics with no productive focus.

How to Use the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix

You should definitely launch your campaign effort with a planning meeting or retreat to create your Campaign Planning Matrix — but it should be a far more structured and productive discussion than the one described above. Here's what you'll need:

THE SETTING — A quiet, comfortable environment with no distractions (no telephones to answer, no small children requiring attention, no people walking in and out, etc.).

THE SUPPLIES — An easel, lots of butcher paper, masking tape (to display recorded thoughts around the room), and thick colored markers. You may also want to provide food and beverages, depending upon how long the meeting is expected to run.

THE ROLES — A designated facilitator, who ensures that the conversation flows and progress is being made. The facilitator encourages full participation from all planning retreat participants. A recorder, who takes thorough notes. You may also want to consider having a designated timekeeper, to monitor the flow of the agenda and keep things moving.

THE ATTENDEES — All stakeholders in the execution of the plan, such as the chapter chair, membership chair, treasurer, political chair, conservation chair, and committed activists. You might also want to invite your coalition partners and other people who know the community well, understand the issues involved, have important political connections, are seasoned veterans of similar campaigns, or who just need to be part of the team from the onset to ensure their buy-in down the road.

THE TIME FRAME — Usually 3–5 hours, depending upon the complexity of the campaign and on the planning team's experience putting together plans. It should be scheduled for a weekend afternoon, rather than at night, so the attendees are not distracted or fatigued.

THE PREPARATION — Each participant needs to be familiar with the Sierra Club

Campaign Planning Matrix and background information regarding the issue, community and politics of the proposed campaign.

Running a Planning Meeting for Creating Your Campaign Planning Matrix

The role of the facilitator at the planning meeting is not to dominate the discussion, but rather to move the agenda along — drawing out reluctant participants, managing overly boisterous ones, building consensus, etc. The person who takes the role of facilitator may want to consider dividing each item on the agenda into three sections: brainstorming, evaluating, and deciding. During the brainstorming portion of the discussion, ideas are offered without any editorializing and recorded on butcher paper for group review. During the evaluation process, the group ranks the ideas, to assess what is valuable, what warrants further consideration, and what is negligible. Finally, during the decision phase, the group comes to consensus as to what exactly needs to be done.

You may also want to begin the meeting by establishing, as a group, some additional ground rules for the discussion. These might include: no interrupting each other, no "sidebar" discussions, no repeating or rephrasing things that have already been said, etc. If the group does agree to a set of guidelines, the facilitator will be responsible for making sure they are followed throughout the meeting.

SIERRA CLUB CAMPAIGN PLANNING MATRIX

1. Issue Focus

2. Campaign Goals

- Conservation goals
- Organizational goals

3. The Lay of the Land

- Organizational strengths and weaknesses
- Allies and opponents

4. Strategy

- Strategic vehicle
- Targets
  - ☐ Decision-makers (primary targets)
  - ☐ Secondary targets
  - ☐ Public audiences

5. Campaign Communication

- Message/slogan
- Story
- Media outlets

6. Tactics and Timeline

7. Resource Management

- Campaign budget
- Donor management/fundraising
- Volunteer recruitment and stewardship

What's Next?

After this initial planning meeting, the leadership will need to do some additional work to turn the completed matrix into a more comprehensive written plan. This will include conducting some additional research to further develop your group's strategy, fine-tune the message, design an earned media program, flesh out some of the details of your tactics, finalize a budget, etc. (The following chapters of this manual provide all of the information you will need to do this.) However, thanks to the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix, you now have a solid foundation on which to build, and a shared framework among the entire team outlining exactly how the campaign will be conducted.

CYNTHIA JOHNSON

Paddle Power: Sierra Club members in Virginia took to their canoes to say no to a plan to divert 75 million gallons of water a day from the Mattaponi River to a nearby reservoir.

CHAPTER 4

Defining Your Focus

In this chapter we cover the first three sections of the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix — issue focus, campaign goals, and the lay of the land. We will also be addressing what additional research may be needed to more fully develop your campaign plan.

The Issue Criteria Checklist

The first step, of course, is picking a salient issue for your campaign. Your Sierra Club chapter or group may deem a myriad of different environmental problems in your community as being of critical importance. So just how do you go about selecting the right issue? Here are the criteria you can use in making such a determination:

- ☐ The issue relates directly to the Sierra Club's national conservation priorities and impacts your local community.
- ☐ The campaign will result in a concrete and quantifiable improvement in the environment.
- ☐ The issue has saliency, clarity, and resonance (in other words, it is something a broad range of people will understand and care deeply about).
- ☐ The issue is widely and deeply felt in your community/state.
- ☐ The organization has the resources (money, people, and connections) necessary to win this campaign.
- ☐ The issue will bring people together. It will not be internally divisive and will not alienate outside individuals and/or organizations that may be

needed as allies down the road.

- ☐ The issue will strengthen the chapter or group by recruiting new members, energizing current members to a greater level of activism, developing leadership skills, and building coalitions with other like-minded organizations.
- ☐ The campaign is winnable — having clear targets, a realistic time frame, and achievable goals.

If your proposed issue focus does not meet enough of the above criteria, *do not proceed with the campaign.* Choose another issue.

Once you've chosen an issue, do some homework. Contact the national office, other environmental organizations, scientific experts, university professors, relevant Web sites, etc., to secure reliable and comprehensive data regarding the potential environmental, economic, and social impacts of your proposed policy change.

Establishing Campaign Goals

Next, you will need to establish a set of external conservation goals, as well as a set of internal organizational goals for your campaign. Conservation goals can have three tiers: immediate, interim, and long-term. For example:

IMMEDIATE CONSERVATION GOAL — "Stop the local authorities from approving the construction of this toxic-waste incinerator in our town."

INTERIM CONSERVATION GOAL — "Inform targeted public audiences that all such facilities are hazardous to the environment and the public's health."

LONG-TERM CONSERVATION GOAL — "Eliminate all toxic-waste incinerators from the State Department of Environmental Quality's Capacity Assurance Plan."

Make sure your conservation goals are realistic, achievable, and *quantifiable*— things that can happen in this particular region and political climate, given the time frame and available resources.

It may take several years to secure some political victories; therefore, your immediate and interim goals would be about "planting the seeds of change," taking incremental, but important steps toward your ultimate destination. For instance, let's say it takes five votes on the city council to pass a new zoning law, but you know you can only secure four votes. However, it only takes four votes to place a moratorium on rezonings. It's a temporary solution, and it's a smaller

See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Forest activists rally in Couer d'Alene, Idaho, in spring of 1997 to draw attention to a bill by their senator that would have increased logging on national forests.

win, but it may be the right choice for now.

As we explained in chapter 2, to be deemed "a success" every campaign must leave the organization larger and stronger than when it began. Your organizational goals will specify exactly how you will achieve this in terms of expanding your resources, and provide you with a way to quantify and measure success. Here's an example.

This campaign will:

- ☐ recruit 20 new activists (people)
- ☐ develop two new leaders willing to take on significant responsibilities
- ☐ secure five new reporters/producers who know you by name and will return your calls
- ☐ create a comprehensive list or database that includes lists or contacts at three TV stations, three newspapers, five radio stations and two magazines
- ☐ raise $1,000
- ☐ establish good working relationships with two new coalition partners (connection)
- ☐ spend at least half of the group's time and effort reaching out to non–Sierra Club members

Both your conservation and organizational goals should be as specific as possible, written down, and monitored throughout the campaign effort. If, during the course of the planning process, you discover that your goals are not achievable, you will need to re-evaluate your position.

Surveying the Lay of the Land

At the initial planning meeting, the group should discuss some of the key factors involved in the campaign. This will include assessing the following:

□ Organizational Strengths and Weaknesses

Take a good, hard look at your current resources. How much money do you have? How many active volunteers do you have? What specific skills do they possess? Do you have any staff available for this campaign? What type of workspace and equipment are available? What kind of experience does your leadership have with the local media? What relationships do you currently have with the decision-makers? What are you bringing to this effort?

□ Allies and Opponents

Who else besides the Sierra Club has a stake in this issue? Which special-interest groups (other environmental groups, sportsmen, nurses, teachers, etc.) are most likely to support your position and would be beneficial to your campaign? What resources might your allies contribute to strengthen your position? How can you undercut your opposition's strengths? If you cannot get a key group to join your effort, do you think you can work to have them stay neutral? How will these various players impact the dynamics of this campaign?

Find out everything you can about the individuals and/or organizations that are going to actively oppose your campaign. This might entail reading newspaper clippings, using the Web, calling their public relations departments, reading their annual reports, soliciting information from other groups who have already done battle with them, etc. The objective is to get to know your opponents as well as you know yourself.

Once you have answered these types of questions, you will have what we call the "lay of the land" — a preliminary survey of the playing field on which this campaign will be waged and the key players involved.

CHAPTER 5

Developing a Winning Strategy

In this chapter, we cover the strategy section of the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix. A strategy defines *how* you will take delivery. It sets forth exactly *who* will support you in your effort, and *who* will ultimately meet your demands. It is your blueprint for victory.

Being clear about your goals is the first step in developing a solid strategy.

Choosing Your Strategic Vehicle

As we stated earlier, there are many different avenues for effecting change. Once you have defined your issue focus and established campaign goals, you will need to decide on a means of achieving these goal. For example: if your issue focus is "air pollution" and your conservation goal is "to reduce auto emissions," you might try to address this challenge in any number of ways. You could try to pass legislation, exert pressure on certain manufacturers, lobby a regulatory agency, put an initiative on the ballot, or work on campaigns to get more pro-environment candidates elected to your state legislature. The important thing is to select a strategic vehicle that is accessible given your particular situation, taking into consideration such factors as the current political climate, your relationships with various government officials, and your chapter's or group's resources.

Defining Your Targets

Once you have selected a strategic vehicle you will need to figure out exactly what individual(s) you need to target in order to secure victory. A strategic campaign is one that allocates all of its time, money, people, and effort solely on those primary targets that are worthy of the investment. Therefore, strategy is as much about what you will not be doing as it is about what you will be doing. One of the most common problems activists have is accepting that there are certain people who just won't be persuaded. Many environmentalists cannot believe anyone would cast a vote against clean water or air. It's tough to get past this type of thinking — but force yourself. A winning strategy necessitates writing some people off, and focusing only on those people you can influence.

Targeting the Decision-Makers (Primary Targets)

First of all, who has the power to deliver a victory for you? This question must always be answered with the names of individuals — not institutions. In other words, "the legislature" or "the city council" is not going to determine the fate of your effort; certain members of those governmental bodies will. If your goal is to secure an executive decision from one or two individuals (the governor, the CEO of a corporation, the secretary of transportation, etc.), then those are your targets. If, however, you need to secure a majority vote in favor or against a particular policy from a group of individuals (the legislature, the board of directors, the planning commission, etc.), then you will need to select a subgroup among this governing body to target.

Find out everything you can about how the governing body operates (when it meets, its policies and procedures, etc.). Then research everything you can about its various members (their past voting records, their individual ideologies, their political connections, their campaign contributors, etc.). If you are targeting an individual government official (such as a governor or secretary of agriculture), find out what you can about his background (past environmental positions, political connections, campaign contributors, etc.).

To determine which decision-makers to target within a larger body, start by drawing a diagram like this:

Our Base (for us)	**Persuadables** (up for grabs)	**Their Base** (against us)

Then, based on the research you have conducted, divide up the decision-makers amid these three columns.

For example, let's say that you are trying to pass a new zoning ordinance at the city council level. There are seven members, and you need a simple majority or

TODD HETTENBACH

Student Power: More than 1,500 student environmentalists attended the 1995 "Free the Planet" conference in Philadelphia, sponsored in part by the Sierra Student Coalition.

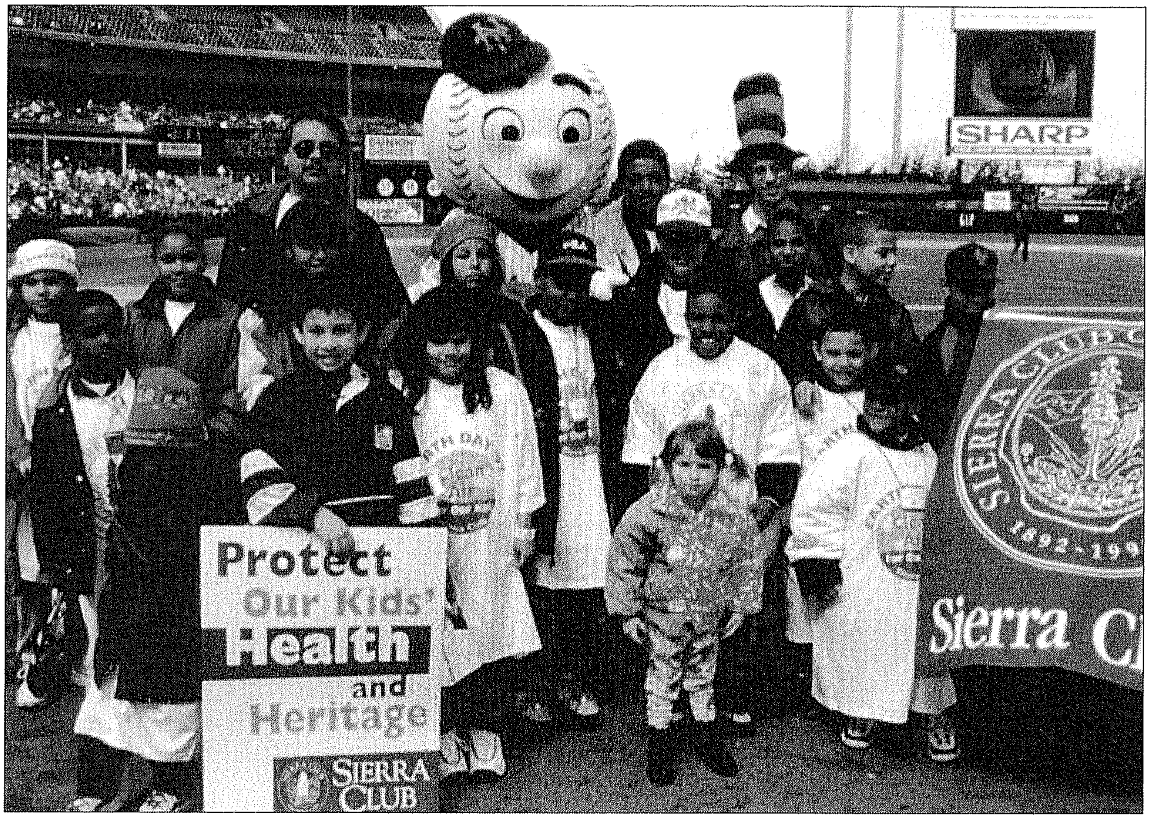
four votes to win. You have assessed the current sentiment among the council members regarding your proposal, and you have divided them up as follows:

City Council Members

YES	?	NO
Happy	Sleepy	Grumpy
Doc	Bashful	Dopey
	Sneezy	

In this scenario, your strategy would entail:

- ☐ solidifying, thanking, and mobilizing support from our base — Happy and Doc
- ☐ securing the support of at least two out of the three persuadables —Sleepy, Bashful, and/or Sneezy



Clean Air, Baseball, and Apple Pie: Kids from Hunts Point in the Bronx pose with Mr. Met at Shea Stadium — part of the Sierra Club's 1997 Earth Day outreach in support of clean air standards.

- writing off those who are clearly established within their base — Grumpy and Dopey

Overall, your objective is to hold these targeted decision-makers accountable to public demand and make them deliver on your conservation goals. But how will you accomplish this? You will need to look at each target within the decision-making body, and determine exactly what you want from them and what tactics you will employ to accomplish your goal. For example, you might want your base supporters (those already with you) to help you persuade the swing votes. Or you might want to have them try to persuade one of the opponents to abstain from voting. You will need to design an individual strategy for reaching each of the key decision-makers, and a set of specific tactics for achieving that strategy (see chapter 7 for more on this).

Secondary Targets (Community Leaders)

Once you have determined which particular decision-makers are key to this campaign, give some thought to who you might be able to enlist in influencing them. What other elected officials or community leaders have direct influence over your target? Do these people share your goals? Would they be willing to use their connectedness to your primary targets to advance your goal? Who has a relationship or connection with the decision-makers that could prove useful to you? This might include anyone from the governor to a county commissioner to the president of the local PTA. Think about what you can ask these various individuals to contribute to your campaign (a public endorsement, a meeting with or letter to your targeted decision-maker(s), etc.).

Targeting Your Campaign's Public Audiences

Finally, in developing your strategy, take a look at the community in which you are waging this campaign, and determine which specific groups of people you will enlist to create demand and hold the decision-makers accountable for meeting that demand. What types of people live here? What is the demographic breakdown? What are their income and education levels? Who are the major employers? What is the political climate? What is current public opinion regarding this issue? If you cannot afford to hire a professional pollster, contact the national Sierra Club office to see if someone already has survey and/or focus group data that may be useful to you. If not, you will need to rely on anecdotal data, such as intelligence gathered from various parties at your planning meeting, other community leaders, and organizations that may have run similar campaigns in this area or other regions. Think in terms of geographic, demographic, and constituency groups.

It may be helpful for you to keep in mind that, based on recent polling data, the Sierra Club has identified the following demographic groups as good targets nationwide for environmental issue campaigns:

- ☐ women 20–45 years old
- ☐ hunters and anglers
- ☐ family farmers
- ☐ young people and students
- ☐ people of color/communities of color.

These are just general guidelines; your targeted audiences should be selected based on your particular geographic area and issue. (For example, if you are trying to block the construction of a new superstore, you might want to target individuals residing in that immediate neighborhood and/or certain small business owners who might be affected by this development project.)

Select no more than two or three public audiences. Once you have identified your audiences, you will need to focus the campaign exclusively on persuading these people to join your effort (using the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle) and not waste any resources (money, time, or effort) on individuals who are not in the targeted group.

Enforcing Strategic Discipline

As the momentum builds over the course of the campaign, it may become increasingly difficult to remain focused on your designated strategy. Some members of the team may start to panic when the opposition launches a bruising attack, and argue strenuously for a whole new approach. Others may feel uncomfortable with limiting the effort to sway only the identified targets among the decision-makers, and argue for "expanding our box." Still others may want to spend valuable resources on reaching out to groups within the community that were not one of your original audiences. This is why a comprehensive planning process is so important. If you have done your homework, completed the Sierra Club Campaign Planning Matrix, and made thoughtful decisions in advance about how you will execute this effort, you will be running a proactive, rather than merely a reactive, campaign. Our advice is to stay the course.

It is better to define and rigorously maintain one clear strategy, even if it is somewhat flawed, than to flounder for months on end in search of the perfect direction.

Experience shows that it is better to define and rigorously maintain one clear strategy, even if it is somewhat flawed, than to flounder for months on end in search of the perfect direction and end up nowhere.

CHAPTER 6

Crafting Your Campaign Communication

In this chapter, we cover the communication section of the Campaign Planning Matrix. Now that we have defined exactly *who* we are going to talk to in this campaign, it is time to address *what* we are going to say. This may well be one of the most time-consuming and contentious debates in your planning process. It should be. You will not win a campaign by merely telling people to "do the right thing." You will need to *make your case.*

The goal of all your communication is to frame the debate for the campaign, controlling how the issue will be discussed by the general public, the media, and the decision-makers. Your communication must let people know who is the good guy and who is the bad guy. You must pose this public policy question in such a way that any reasonable person has only one choice — to side with you.

This is achieved by establishing just a few, carefully-selected phrases during the planning process which will guide all of your communication. First you will create a message — a brief sentence that captures the essence of your story. Then you will craft a story — dramatizing the problem and what needs to be done (usually 3–5 sentences).

Before approving any piece of campaign communication — be it a speech, direct-mail piece or letter-to-the-editor — ask yourself these two questions: "Does this tell our story?" and "Does this drive home and repeat our message?"

The Seven 'C's of Effective Campaign Communication

Below we offer you a simple way to remember the essential components of all campaign communication — "Sail the Seven 'C's." To be effective, your campaign communication must be:

CLEAR — simple and easy to understand

CONCISE — brief and to the point

CONNECTED — relates directly to the local community and what is happening right there, right now

COMPELLING — connects on an emotional or gut level (not just an intellectual one) with the targeted public audience, and communicates a sense of urgency

CONTRASTING — is something only your side can claim, and clearly distinguishes between the two choices (good vs. evil)

CREDIBLE — is not only factual, but also "rings true"

CONSISTENT — is repeated over and over again throughout your group's campaign communication

Starting Where They Are

All campaign communication must be carefully crafted to appeal to those key targeted public audiences you have identified as being "up for grabs." Your base is already with you. Your opponent's base is already against you. The persuadables are the individuals who will determine whether or not you may take delivery.

Another old political adage goes, "Start where they are." Ask yourself: Who are these people in the middle? Why are they undecided about this issue? Chances are, most of them pay very little attention to the world of politics. They are not strong partisans. They are not activists. When asked directly during a survey they may identify themselves as "environmentalists," but they probably do little more for the cause than dispose of their soda cans in a recycle bin.

The people in the middle are busy earning a living, driving their children to soccer games, paying bills, and watching their favorite sitcoms. Yes, they are concerned about having clean air, safe drinking water, and nice parks — but they don't spend a lot of time or energy worrying about endangered species or maintaining the biodiversity in ecosystems. They are generally much more concerned about curtailing crime on local streets, improving their kids' education, getting and keeping a good job, and reducing their tax burden.

So, as you begin to craft your communication, think about these people — and "start where they are." First of all, this means focusing your argument on what will be most meaningful to them. For example, let's say you are working to stop a superstore from being built in an open-space area near a wetland. You could focus your campaign on the need to: (a) stop unsightly sprawl and maintain a quaint, small-town atmosphere; (b) preserve open space for family outings and recreation; (c) maintain the wetland to protect local beauty, wildlife, and/or water quality; or (d) protect the economic health of small businesses already in the area. Note that "(e) all of the above" is not an option. To ensure that your campaign is heard, select and maintain one clear angle.

In addition, when communicating your message and story, try to use language that the targeted public audience understands and responds to. For example:

use	don't use
soot	particulate matter
smog	ozone
the web of life	biodiversity
habitat	ecosystem
handout	corporate welfare
pollution secrecy bill	audit privilege
get away with	immunity

You will also want to use "value" language that makes it clear what's at stake: for example, "our children's health" or "our children's inheritance."

This isn't about "dumbing down" your argument or being condescending. It is about being respectful of your audience, and not using terminology that is foreign or alienating. (For additional information on this, you can contact the national office and order a copy of the Sierra Club Communications Manual.)

Choosing a Campaign Message

After you have developed a story, you will need to create a campaign message. At the Sierra Club, we use the term "message" to refer to that one, brief (generally 10 words or less), catchy, and memorable slogan that will be in all of the campaign communication. For instance, the Sierra Club's national message: "Protect America's Environment — For Our Families, For Our Future." It is not, in and of itself, the whole story, but it captures the essence of what the Club stands for and is trying to achieve.

Please note that there is no "s" at the end of the word message. You must commit the campaign to just one message. This is what you will use as the tag line in all campaign literature, advertising, and other communication. This is what you will print on all of your visibility materials, such as rally placards, yard signs, and bumper stickers.

And one last time — your message must be: clear, concise, connected, compelling, contrasting, credible, and consistent.

Telling a Good Sierra Club Story

The best way to communicate effectively with the public on environmental issues is to develop a simple and compelling story that's repeated over and over again. Sierra Club's opposition has mastered the art of storytelling. For instance, most Americans have heard that the spotted owl has cost thousands of families their jobs. True or not, this story, any story, told often enough, becomes part of the common lore that reporters, lawmakers, and the public come to believe. (Unlike our opponents, however, we must ensure that every story we tell is completely accurate and reliable.)

Here's another example. In campaigning against the Endangered Species Act, the Wise Use Movement may have released some scientific studies on what was wrong with the ESA and how much it was costing business. But we can't remember any of them, and we bet you can't either. What we do remember are their half-dozen stories, largely bogus and inaccurate, that resounded in newspapers, radio shows, and coffee shops from coast to coast. One radio talk show host in Connecticut actually asked Carl Pope, with deep concern, about a story he had heard regarding an immigrant farmer in California who was put in prison for accidentally running a tractor over an old rat's nest. Not even the Wise Use Movement distorted that story quite that way! But that's the power of a story. It creates conversation.

As stated in chapter 1, to be compelling, stories must have the following core elements:

- a problem or threat
- a victim, a person or place in distress
- a villain who is responsible and should be held accountable (This can be a group of people, such as the city council or a corporation, or an individual, such as one politician. It is always preferable if you can make it one specific target, such as Captain Hazelwood of the Exxon *Valdez* in the Alaska oil spill, instead of the oil industry as a whole.)

- ☐ a hero (presumably the public who can make the difference by getting involved and speaking up, and/or public officials who can stand up for the victim)
- ☐ a successful, or potentially successful, resolution (a way to solve the problem)

For example:

The Du Pont Corporation (the villain) wants to mine acreage adjacent to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (the problem). Their mining threatens the quality of the water filtered through the swamp, as well as the birds, fish, and other wildlife that make their homes there (the victim). This wildlife refuge is a national treasure, part of our children's unique inheritance, and private companies should not be allowed to destroy what belongs to all of us. Americans (the heroes) should speak up and tell the chairman of Du Pont to drop his plans to destroy the Okefenokee (the resolution).

Stories can also be used to put a human face on an issue. Instead of telling the media and public about the 40,000 kids suffering from respiratory disease in your city, you can tell a story that establishes a personal, local connection. For instance:

Texas Activists Protest Logging in California: Protesters marched through Houston past the headquarters of Maxxam, the company clearcutting the Headwaters Forest in northern California.

Kyle Damitz (the victim) is an 8-year-old boy from the suburbs of Chicago with asthma. He's on three kinds of steroids, and has been in and out of the hospital with breathing problems all summer because of the smog and soot in our air (the problem). Right now, by supporting two new clean-air standards, we have a chance to clamp down on polluting power plants and other smoke-stack industries that are threatening Kyle's health and the health of millions of other American children (the villains and the threat). By being active citizens and speaking out, Americans (the heroes) can force industry to clean up our air and help Kyle breathe easier (the resolution).

As you can see, these stories meet our criteria: clear, concise, connected, compelling, contrasting, credible, and consistent.

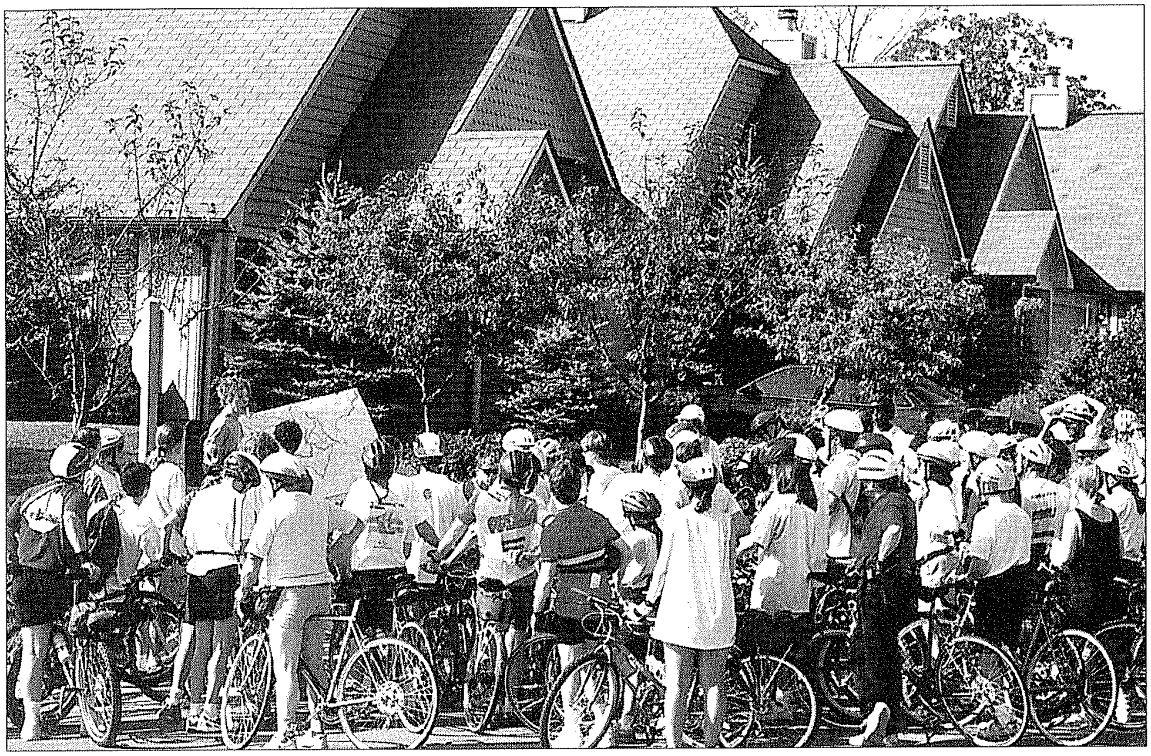
Practicing Message Discipline

Once a story and message for the campaign has been agreed upon by your group, it is vital that you strictly enforce consistent usage of the story and message in all communication. In order to successfully be heard above the cacophony of information that is aired during the course of a campaign, you must keep this message simple, and repeat it over and over and over again. The average American is inundated with hundreds of advertisements and other messages every day. The ones that work are the ones that are repeated and reinforced by other messages. Activists and leaders tend to get tired of a story or a message once we have heard it several dozen times. But remember, if we have heard it several dozen times, the average person in your targeted public audience, may have heard it just once. (Most teachers say that it takes six repetitions for something to be fully absorbed by the average person.)

In his book *Showtime*, on the 1996 presidential election, Roger Simon comments:

*"Modern campaigning is not about dramatic jump starts. It is about solid repetition. It's about distilling and driving home your message again and again and again in media market after media market. Unlike the players in the game, the public is not tuning in to the campaign on a daily or even weekly basis. People catch a glimpse here, a phrase there. And for anything to register, it must be repeated relentlessly. 'You sell the image by repetition,' says David Axelrod, a Democratic political consultant. 'Here is the rule we follow with our clients: when the campaign staff and the reporters become **physically ill** over the repetition of the message, only then have you **begun** to penetrate the public consciousness.'"*

JUDY THOMPSON



Message on Two Wheels: In Michigan, a flock of "Tour de Sprawl" bikes focused public — and media attention — on the dangers of suburban sprawl.

This is what is commonly referred to as "message discipline," and it is what very often separates the success stories from the better-luck-next-time stories.

Targeting Media Outlets

Armed with the information of *who* you are going to talk to and *what* you are going to say to them, you can now figure out how to best deliver your message and story to the targeted audience. This will require making an assessment of the media outlets in your area and targeting the outlets that are most likely to reach the biggest number of people in your targeted audience.

If you do not already have a complete list of the media outlets in your area, contact the media department at the national office. Verify that all of the information (contacts, phone numbers, fax numbers, etc.) is current.

You should consider targeting all types of media outlets, including television stations (network and cable), radio stations, newspapers (dailies, weeklies, alternative press, etc.), magazines, constituency group newsletters, and electronic media (Web sites and on-line services). The most important question to ask is:

Which media outlets will reach your targeted public audiences, primary targets and secondary targets?

The media goal of your group's campaign should be to get the outlets that are most likely to reach your chosen public audiences and targets, to cover your campaign as often as possible. Here are a couple of examples and tips:

You can reach a big portion of most public audiences by getting coverage on the local evening TV news. However, if you are targeting hunters and anglers, you will also want to target the outdoor column in the local newspaper and the fishing report that airs on the country music radio station on Saturday morning.

You will almost definitely want to get coverage in the local daily newspaper. But your targeting should be more specific than that: Based on your public audience, where do you want to be covered in the newspaper? In the editorials, where it is more likely to influence community leaders? In the weekly health section to influence soccer moms? On the front page to get the attention of all targeted audiences? Read the Designing Media Tactics section of this manual which starts on page 59 to get more information about types of newspaper coverage and other types of outlets to target.

Make your targeting as specific as possible. You should target individual reporters and producers as much as possible. If the local evening news is a targeted media outlet, specify that your campaign will pitch stories to Jill Smith, producer of the evening news on Channel 2, Jim Johnson, producer of the evening news on Channel 4, etc. If you are targeting the outdoors coverage of a newspaper, find out who the outdoor reporter is and be sure you are communicating with her directly. The more specifically you target media outlets, the more efficient your media work will be. If you don't have a media directory, simply call the media outlet and ask who is responsible for the type of coverage you are interested in getting.

Once you have targeted your media outlets, review previously published articles and editorials to determine what these writers and editors deem newsworthy, if they have a particular bias, what kind of style they have, etc.

CHAPTER 7

Designing and Timing Campaign Tactics

Now you've defined your goals, strategy, and campaign communication. In this chapter, we will look at how to develop a set of tactics for achieving your goals and communicating your story. Again, too many campaign groups try to start their planning process by brainstorming a "to do" list before they have done all the research and analysis necessary to determine the right tactics for accomplishing their goals. A campaign should be planned motion, not frantic commotion. And that's what tactics are all about.

In this chapter we start by addressing different grassroots activities aimed at creating demand, ensuring accountability, and taking delivery. Next we discuss how to develop an aggressive earned-media program to help ensure press coverage of your campaign. Then we briefly touch on different types of paid advertising you might use in communicating your message. We conclude with a tactics criteria checklist, and some guidance on how to develop a campaign timeline.

The Domino Effect

Overall, your grassroots campaign should have a logical and coherent rhythm — starting with a well-planned public announcement of your conservation goals, followed up by a set of strategic activities that each build upon one another like dominoes falling in sequence to generate energy and momentum, and culminating in a triumphant climax and celebration. Remember: first, create demand. Then hold decision-makers accountable to that demand. And finally, take delivery. The effect should be that of gradually turning up the volume on the radio, to build to a crescendo that cannot be ignored. In organizing there is a "theory of escalating tactics." Like a volume knob on the radio, start quiet and get louder. Start small and get bigger.

Creating Demand

Your strategy already sets forth how you will take delivery. The next step is to figure out how you will create demand for that delivery. As stated in chapter 1, creating demand is about more than just providing the public with information about an environmental problem. It is also about communicating a compelling message, explaining how individual citizens can become engaged in working toward a solution, and providing an easy vehicle for their engagement. In other words, it is about asking, thanking, informing, and involving the community — and then starting the cycle all over again. (Sound familiar?)

In creating demand, you should always look for ways you can:

- inform as many people as possible about what is at stake
- turn your issue into a story with a hero, villain, victim, and resolution — and tell it over and over again
- involve people in the issue — have them spend time in the place you are trying to protect, show them a water sample, ask them to help map a proposed wilderness area, etc.
- ask them to take the easiest possible action, and then, thank them for their participation
- connect them to other people, help them to feel empowered and part of a greater whole
- create as much coverage in the media as possible to encourage public discussion
- continue to ask, thank, inform, and involve them to solidify a connection, so they will take part in holding the decision-makers accountable and, ultimately, become the heroes of this story

There are three general types of tactics you can employ to create demand: direct contact, general visibility, and media tactics. Since media tactics are critical for all three phases of the campaign (creating demand, establishing accountability, taking delivery), media is discussed in a separate section at the end of this chapter.

Direct Contact Activities

Direct contact activities are aimed at your targeted public audience, and are focused on personally engaging people in the campaign as volunteers, donors, and/or active supporters. When developing direct contact tactics, keep in mind Cesar Chavez' secret to organizing: "Talk to one person, then another, then another…"

Direct contact activities might include:

First, create demand. Then hold decision-makers accountable to that demand. And finally, take delivery.

PHONEBANKS — These can be very time- and labor-intensive, but highly effective. The most productive method is to recruit volunteers to make calls to a strategically selected phone list, at a designated time, in one, central location, with a carefully constructed script or talking points. (Volunteers might ask you if they may just take a list of names and numbers home with them to work through at their leisure, but this should be discouraged.) You should estimate that each volunteer will be able to reach approximately 10 people per hour. The phone calls should be very brief, courteous, and focused on one specific goal. (For example: (a) putting up a yard sign, (b) attending a rally or public hearing, (c) making a donation, but not "(d) all of the above.")

DOOR-TO-DOOR CANVASSING — For an even more personal approach, you may want to enlist volunteers to walk door-to-door through targeted neighborhoods, or to specific homes, using voter file lists (for example, households with Democratic or Independent women 25–45 years old) to distribute literature and/or secure signatures on a petition. The volunteers should have a brief script or talking points to guide their conversations, and leave each person they contact with a compelling flyer or brochure that reinforces the campaign's message. If you do not have the time or people required for this activity, you may want to consider doing a "lit drop," where the volunteers do not ring the doorbells, but rather just leave the literature at each designated house. (If you have the budget for printing doorhangers, these are highly recommended.)

NEIGHBORHOOD COFFEES OR HOUSE PARTIES — Some grassroots organizing campaigns arrange get-togethers in supporters' homes, where the host invites neighbors over to talk about the issue at hand, and how they might be able to assist by volunteering their time and/or making a financial contribution. These gatherings require some planning, but can be very effective in recruiting new activists to the cause.

LEAFLETING — This entails sending volunteers out to distribute campaign literature or secure petition signatures in public locations where the persuadable targets of your campaign are likely to be. Do some research to identify upcoming community events that make sense for your campaign. For instance, you can do leafleting at a county fair, a 10k race, the trailhead of a local recreation area, bait shops, gun shows, mass transit stops, high school football games, etc.

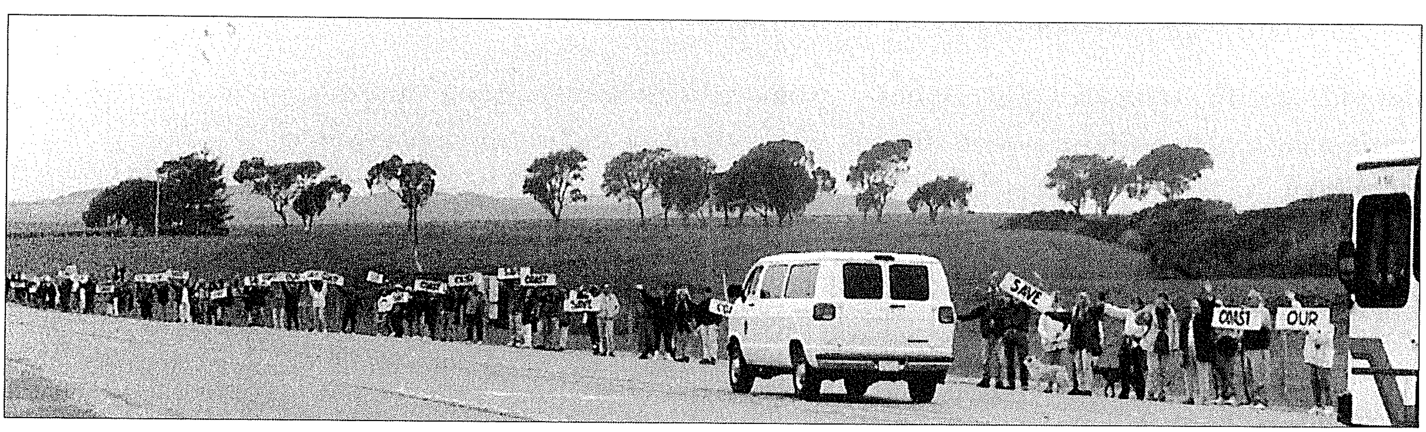
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION — This includes postcards, e-mail messages, postings on relevant Web pages, articles in constituency group newsletters, etc. These forms of communication are not as personal as the ones listed above, and therefore, generally not as effective in engaging participation, but are significantly less labor- and time-intensive.

☐ Visibility Activities

The other way that a campaign works to create demand is through visibility activities, which are directed toward all of your targets — those within the community, decision-makers, and media outlets. Their purpose is to demonstrate widespread support for your position, generate community "buzz," and set your campaign up for the accountability phase. Whereas the direct contact activities listed above are like spraying a garden hose full-force at a particular target, visibility activities are like a lawn sprinkler, covering more ground but with much less intensity.

Visibility activities might include the following:

RALLIES, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND MARCHES — These can be great morale boosters for volunteers. However, in order to secure any press coverage, these events will also need to include something newsworthy. Be sure to use your creativity and maximize the visual impact of the event. (For instance, if you are trying to clean up a local river, you might want to organize a flotilla, with a large fleet of supporters sailing down the endangered waterway, waving flags and chanting your message.) In addition, it is important that you work hard to ensure a strong turnout for such



LARRY BSARBIER

Human Billboard: Almost 1,000 protesters rallied along a Southern California highway against a proposed hotel development on one of the last wild stretches of the state's coastline. In January 1998, the California Coastal Commission rejected the proposal.

events. If the media does attend but only a handful of supporters do, that could end up being the story.

YARD SIGNS — If you decide to make signs to advertise your campaign, you should keep it very simple, with no more than 7–10 words in bold, easy-to-read print in pleasant colors. The most convincing ones are yard signs, since these communicate to people throughout the neighborhood that someone they know is committed enough to publicize his support. Posters plastered on telephone polls and other public locations are not nearly as persuasive, and often illegal.

OTHER VISIBILITY MATERIALS — This would include campaign buttons, T-shirts, bumper stickers, signs/placards, etc., that communicate the campaign slogan. Although volunteers may clamor for such paraphernalia, your group may not be able to afford it. If you do make such an investment, keep it to a minimum, and monitor its usage carefully (for example, make sure the bumper stickers are actually going on cars, not just being stuffed in a drawer or thrown away). Lapel stickers are the cheapest, most effective visibility material.

Making Leaders Accountable

As we discussed in chapter 1, accountability entails both thanking leaders who do the right thing, and criticizing leaders who do the wrong thing. Accountability activities focus on a particular decision-maker and highlight his past actions — votes, co-sponsorships, or public statements about the environment — and are designed to influence a future action.

Once you have developed tactics for creating public demand, you will need to shift your focus to the decision-makers and how to compel them to respond to that demand. This entails engaging both the public and the media in:

- solidifying, mobilizing, and thanking current supporters
- aggressively lobbying the undecided members to "do the right thing"
- publicly criticizing those who come out against your issue, and thanking those who did the right thing

At this point in the campaign, you have already set forth your story. Now it is time to find out who will be the good guys and who will be the bad guys.

Two sensations motivate all human beings: pain and pleasure. The point of your accountability work is to make it politically painful for the decision-makers to oppose you, and politically pleasurable to join you. Of course, we're not talking about inflicting physical pain (or pleasure, for that matter). We're talking about evaluating each of your targeted decision-makers, and demonstrating how it would be in their best interests to support your position (to ensure their re-election, community standing, profits, reputation for fairness, etc.).

In your accountability work you will, once again, be employing the organization-building cycle — asking, thanking, informing, and involving the targeted decision-makers. Here's how it works:

First, you *ask* the decision-maker to support your position. For instance, if the immediate conservation goal is to stop a timber sale in your local watershed, ask your member of Congress to write a letter to the Forest Service opposing the timber sale, or to come to a citizens' meeting to speak about it. If there is already a public hearing scheduled, ask your congressperson to come to that meeting. If there is not, schedule a citizens' meeting, so that she will be asked to support your position.

If the congressperson opposes the timber sale, write a letter to the editor praising her *(thanks)* — and then send her office a copy. Have someone attend the next town meeting to get up, tell everyone what she did, and thank her. Deliver a bouquet of wildflowers from the forest at the town meeting.

Next. let the congressperson know you are going to *inform* the community about whether or not the decision-maker responded to its environmental demands. (Note that you are now informing both your target and the community — informing the community is the first step in the cycle with the community, since the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle can begin anywhere on the circle.)

If the congressperson refuses to support your cause, continue to apply pressure on her, but more intensely. Write letters-to-the-editor. Arrange phonebanks asking Sierra Club members to call and protest. Attend the town meeting, but also consider a silent vigil outside the district office. Invite *(involve)* her to join you on an outing to the area. Take the media with you, whether or not she comes.

Involve the community in *thanking* — or criticizing — the decision. Circulate a petition at the shopping center, either thanking or criticizing the congressperson. Call the local radio talk show to urge listeners to write the district office. Contact campaign contributors, local officials, and community leaders. Ask them to call the congressperson to thank or criticize her.

Begin the cycle again. If a vote is coming up on funding for the timber program, ask the congressperson to vote against the funds. Inform everyone who got involved in the last cycle of accountability that the congressperson has a chance to help protect the local roadless area. Build an even stronger public involvement component to hold her accountable.

Here is a brief description of the various tactics you might employ in your accountability work:

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION — This includes mobilizing supporters to send constituent letters, postcards, e-mails, and/or faxes to the decision-makers. Each and every type of communication should reiterate the campaign message. It should establish the record by clearly stating the action by the decision-maker on which this accountability tactic is based. The key to successfully employing this particular tactic is volume. A couple of letters trickling in over a few months will not make an impact; only an all out barrage of endorsements for your campaign's position will get their attention.

LOBBY DAYS — These are very time-consuming, labor-intensive events. However, if you have sufficient resources, and these events are appropriate for the type of campaign you are running, lobby days can be highly productive. The idea is to mobilize the troops for a day at the Capitol, starting with a rally to garner press attention, followed by numerous one-on-one meetings with representatives whom you thank or admonish for past actions, and remind of upcoming opportunities to do the right thing. A great deal of preparation is involved (recruiting participants, preparing briefing papers and talking points, sending out press releases, arranging appointments with the elected officials, etc.), so it is important to start your planning process very early to ensure an impressive turnout.

Also, once you have adequately created demand, you might want to consider organizing an "in-district" meeting with a member of Congress or your state legislature. This has three benefits over lobby days: (1) it's easier and cheaper to organize; (2) it's more targeted, and (3) it's more local. The downside is that you don't reach numerous decision-makers in a single day.

PUBLIC HEARINGS — Another method of communication with the decision-makers involves having supporters provide testimony at public meetings. The policy makers may have already scheduled a hearing, or you may need to exert some pressure on them to do so. Either way, once you have a forum, you should prepare your side's testimony very carefully.

Here are a few tips:

- Try to recruit a wide array of respected community leaders to speak, reaching beyond the Sierra Club to show a broad coalition of support (such as teachers, nurses, scientists, etc.).

- ☐ Draft talking points or write out full speeches, making sure that each one communicates the campaign's message, but addresses different salient points that are appropriate to that particular speaker's unique perspective.
- ☐ Do your homework. Find out ahead of time as much as you can about who will be attending the hearing, incorporating issues into the testimony that you think will resonate particularly well with those individuals.
- ☐ Research and respect the guidelines that have been established for the forum (for example, don't bring a 10-page speech when testimony will be limited to three minutes per person).
- ☐ Anticipate the opposition and construct your statements to defuse their arguments.
- ☐ Arrive well-prepared, appropriately attired, courteous, and professional for the meeting.
- ☐ Finally, and most importantly, make sure your supporters are visible. Have folks with signs, buttons, and/or stickers which display your central campaign message.

BIRD-DOGGING — This involves following your opposition around from one event to another (town meetings, press conferences, and rallies), to ask them pointed questions, getting them on the record with the media present, and then using their responses in future accountability work. To increase your odds at garnering media attention for your bird-dogging activities, you should consider various visual aids, such as having volunteers wear gas masks to dramatize the air-quality problem or dress up as hogs to illustrate someone's misguided support of animal factories. Or you might create a continuing character that will serve as your campaign's mascot, such as "Tommy the Toxic Waste Drum," who haunted Gordon Smith during Oregon's U.S. Senate campaign in 1996. Have fun with your bird-dogging, but make sure you: (a) always have your facts straight; and (b) stay within the boundaries of good taste, common sense, and most importantly, the law.

Taking Delivery

Your tactics for taking delivery will depend on what you are trying to accomplish and will vary widely from arena to arena. Taking delivery is an area in which specific knowledge of the arena and the decision-makers is critical. A courtroom has very different dynamics than the planning commission or a congressional election. The reason for this difference is that demand and accountability flow from general human nature and psychology; they are about creating power. Taking delivery involves using power in specific circumstances, and using it intelligently to win a victory. It is about understanding the venue in which you are working, targeting key decision-makers, building good relationships with them, and executing your strategy.

Earned Media

Earned media is a critical tool and resource in all phases of your campaign: creating demand, establishing accountability, and taking delivery of your victory. Some people still refer to this particular element of a campaign as "free media" — but we prefer to call it "earned media." Unfortunately, news coverage does not happen spontaneously. It comes to those campaigns that work hard to attract, maintain, and control the attention of the press. Therefore, the importance of planning and executing an aggressive and strategic earned media program cannot be underestimated. It can make or break your grassroots organizing effort.

Assessing Your Media Resources

In determining how much media coverage your campaign can realistically garner, you must first take a good, hard look at your available resources. This includes money, staff time, volunteer time, your activists' previous press experience and skills, your current relationships with local media outlets, etc. You should not only conduct this kind of analysis for your own Sierra Club chapter or group, but also for each of your various coalition partners.

Once you have a sense of your campaign's resources, put together an earned media program that is ambitious but achievable, considering your particular situation. For instance, if your organization has very limited experience interacting with the press, and has never received much coverage in the local outlets, it would be rather foolish to develop a plan that calls for weekly press conferences. On the other hand, if you have substantial media experience and savvy, it would be equally foolish not to fully capitalize on your potential.

Designing a Media Strategy

Strategically, the media can be used to:

- ☐ Influence decision-makers — Every decision-maker reads the daily paper, watches the TV news, and listens to the radio. If one of your targeted decision-makers reads an editorial or numerous letters-to-the-editor in the local paper supporting your campaign goal, you can bet that she will be more likely to "do the right thing."
- ☐ Generate activism — A mom who sees a story on the local TV news about the health effects of dirty air on her children is much more likely to fill out a post-card provided on a Sierra Club doorhanger at her home, demanding clean air.
- ☐ Flush out and verify the record — A reporter who reveals the true record of a "greenscammer" (someone who is trying to make his record appear to be pro-environment when it is not) will have more credibility with the general public than an activist does.
- ☐ Force a position to be taken or revealed — Arming the media with the right question can help pin down a candidate or corporation that has been avoiding scrutiny.
- ☐ Reveal motives — If it is documented in the media that an elected official's campaign contributors include a long list of oil companies, it is possible to use the story to document a motive of vested self-interest for future oil industry and environmental votes.
- ☐ Hold an official or corporation accountable for the good or bad record they have compiled — Reporters, voters, and consumers are impressed by a pattern of behavior; not just a single vote that could be seen as an exception. Repeated hits in the media work to educate people about patterns of behavior and help them to tell the good guys from the bad guys.

Ask yourself: How will we use media in this particular campaign? What is the strategic goal? What type of coverage, and which particular outlets, will we need to achieve that goal?

There are many different types of coverage and many different media outlets that might cover your campaign. The goal is to match the media tactic to your need. If you are trying to influence the outcome of a vote that's occurring in two weeks, it does not make sense to pitch the story to a magazine that has a threemonth lead-time. If your targets are elites and opinion-makers only, you will want to lean towards using op-eds, editorial board visits, and pitches to influential columnists, rather than tactics such as press conferences or public service announcements, which reach a broader, more general audience.

Your media strategy will be defined by the target you are trying to influence. With the knowledge of which decision-makers and public audiences you are targeting, and an understanding of which type of media coverage tends to influence them, you can develop an effective, efficient, and winning media strategy. For each targeted decision-maker and for each targeted public audience, you should list the type of coverage you need to influence them, and the specific outlets you need to target to reach them.

You should not view your media program as a separate operation within the campaign, but rather as a fully integrated component within the overall effort. The media is a powerful tool that you will be employing to communicate your message to your targets, in order to achieve your ultimate strategic goals. In other words, it is a means to an end, not an end unto itself.

Designing Media Tactics

First, invite the local press to cover all of your organizing, visibility, and accountability activities, in order to broaden each event's potential impact. However, you cannot always count on the media to show up. That's why, in addition to the activities you've already planned, you will also need to invest some energy in designing tactics targeted exclusively to the media. (See the Appendix beginning on page 89 for detailed instructions on many of these tactics.) These might include:

PITCHING NEWS STORIES — "Selling" your story to reporters — engaging their interest, feeding them enough information to make them want to cover the story — is one of the best ways to reach a broad spectrum of your community and to infuse your campaign with a sense of legitimacy. If your campaign shows up on the front page of the local newspaper or is one of the lead stories on the evening TV news, then your targets will see it as one of the things that is "happening" in the community. People expect reporters to act as gatekeepers for them. There is too much happening in the world for people to keep up with everything. They expect the TV, radio, and newspaper reporters to sift through all the potential news and pick the most important stories to run. If they pick your campaign, then your campaign is automatically infused with a sense of legitimacy, because you made it past the gatekeepers. (FYI: Approximately 70 percent of Americans get their news from local television, so that is clearly the best way to get your broadest hit.)

You should not use this tool, however, unless you have something that is truly "newsworthy." Also, news coverage is rarely very targeted. If you are trying to reach a specific audience, there are often more efficient ways than general news coverage. If, for example, you are trying to reach hunters and anglers, you will likely reach more of them in a column in the Outdoors section of the newspaper or through the local fishing TV show, than with a news story in the metro section of the paper.

PITCHING FEATURE STORIES — This can be an excellent way to keep your campaign in the public eye when you are not creating breaking news on a regular basis. Much of the time and space that was once dedicated to news coverage is now filled with feature stories. Have you noticed more "human interest" stories in your newspaper? Does your local TV news seem to focus more on local characters than on national newsmakers? As you become more experienced in this area, you will learn how to give the media what they are asking for. If they want local characters, pitch them the story of your group's conservation chair, who has been fighting for 30 years to protect a nearby wilderness area. If they want human interest, share with them the story of the 12-year-old asthmatic son of one of your clean-air campaign volunteers, and how he can't ride his bike or play baseball on dirty air days. This kind of coverage can tell your campaign's story very powerfully, and is likely to be covered because of the ever-increasing feature coverage from many media outlets.

On the downside, however, features coverage is usually very "soft" in nature, so it is less likely to include any political angles. This makes it most effective during the creating-demand segment of your campaign, but less useful when you are ensuring accountability and taking delivery. By their nature, ensuring accountability and taking delivery require harder-hitting stories that don't work as well as features.

PRESS CONFERENCES — If you have something really newsworthy to report, these can be very effective at getting broad coverage. If you are working in a large media market, however, most reporters are too busy to leave their desks to see just a bunch of talking heads in front of a podium, and will need to be enticed with some great visuals for the cameras (for example, something on fire or exploding). Also, be careful not to overuse this tactic; press conferences require a great deal of time, planning, and labor. (More details on page 93.)

LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITOR (LTEs) — Letters-to-the-editor are among the most widely read portions of a newspaper and should be used in almost every Sierra Club campaign. Having several letters printed about your campaign will make it clear that you are working on an issue of great concern to the community and help create demand. LTEs are much easier to place than news or features coverage, and a great way to raise the visibility early on in your campaign and get volunteers involved. Like all of your campaign communication, each letter should be on message, echoing your designated message and story.

OP-EDS — These give you the opportunity to tell your campaign story in a much longer format than a letter-to-the-editor, in a section of the newspaper that is also well-read. Since you are writing the op-ed (although the newspaper can edit it), you have control over its content (unlike in news coverage, feature coverage, and editorials). Unfortunately, writing a good op-ed does take some time, without any guarantee that it will get printed. Op-eds don't carry the authority that an editorial does, but they are seen as more authoritative than an LTE. (More details on page 102.)

EDITORIALS — Having your local newspaper editorialize in favor of your campaign is one of the most powerful media hits available. Even though you may hear some critical comments about the newspaper around the water cooler, newspapers are generally very well-respected and are seen as a major local authority by the community at large. Decision-makers always read the editorials, and are definitely influenced by their content.

However, positive editorials are not always easy to place. You are competing with every other local issue for very limited space. You also have very little control over the details of the editorial. You can provide the editorial board with the facts, but it will decide how to use them. Editorial boards pride themselves on their objectivity and independence, and they don't want to be seen as being influenced by interest groups. Like all newspaper coverage, their potential impact is being reduced as fewer and fewer people read the newspaper. (More details on page 104.)

COLUMN COVERAGE — Most newspapers have their own columnists and publish syndicated columns. The columnists are generally seen as authoritative. Their opinion doesn't carry the same weight as an editorial, but more weight than an op-ed or LTE. Columns are a good way to raise the visibility of your campaign with a broad audience. However, like editorials, getting a columnist to cover your campaign can be difficult, and you don't have a lot of control over the content.

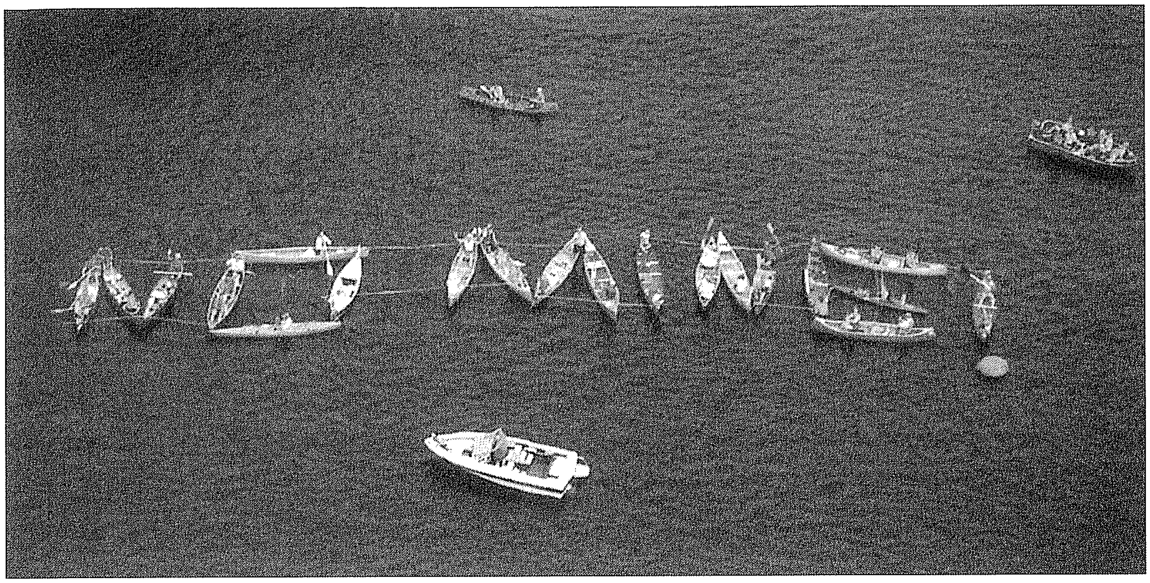
RADIO ACTUALITIES — A radio actuality is a pre-recorded, brief statement or interview for radio stations to use during their news broadcasts. An actuality requires having the technology to tape the statement (a high-quality tape recorder and microphone) and to transmit the statement over the phone (a device called a phone patch which connects to your phone to transmit the recording without losing sound quality.) Many public relations agencies have this technology. Without the technology, you can still get radio news coverage the old-fashioned way: by calling the news director of each station and doing as many one-on-one interviews as possible. Both actualities and one-on-one interviews can be an efficient and effective way to get news coverage for your campaign, but they do require having a polished spokesperson for the campaign who can deliver a colorful soundbite. (More details on page 89.)

RADIO TALK SHOWS — From Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern to your local radio personality, talk radio is an ever-increasing presence on the airwaves. There is a good reason why more and more stations are dedicated to talk radio: people listen. And wherever people are listening, the Sierra Club should be there! Getting your message out on talk radio is one of the easiest media tactics. You don't need to write a report or plan a news conference; you just need to pick up the phone and dial (and re-dial and re-dial, depending on how popular the show is). If you have a well-planned-out talk radio strategy, with volunteers covering all of the major local shows over a period of a couple of weeks, you can significantly raise the presence of your campaign in the community.

On the downside, however, talk radio tends to err towards the extremes, so if your campaign is at all controversial, you can expect some backlash. You can avoid some of this by knowing which shows to go on and avoiding the knee-jerk anti-environmentalists in the crowd. You also can't target a demographic audience very effectively with talk radio, since it has a fairly broad audience.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs) — Both radio and television stations dedicate a small percentage of air time to these. PSAs allow you to reach a fairly broad audience with a basic campaign message. They increase the visibility of your organization and campaign, and are fairly easy to place. The air time for PSAs is free, but you still need the money to produce them, and this is not an insignificant expense, particularly for TV. PSAs are almost always aired at times with small audiences, mostly during the overnight hours, so you will reach a small, diffuse audience (unless your campaign happens to be targeting insomniacs).

COURTESY ECCOLA



Creative Canoeists: A broad coalition of activist groups in Wisconsin successfully blocked a proposed copper mine that would have threatened the Wolf River watershed.

PRESS TOURS — You might want to consider inviting members of the press on a little "field trip" — have them come see and take pictures of the endangered wetland, forest, lake, etc., bringing along an expert who can provide them with important information about its fragile ecosystems.

Remember: Keep in the forefront of your mind your conservation goals. Each and every one of your media events must be targeted to specific media outlets. These events should be strategically focused on communicating your campaign message and story to your campaign targets and/or targeted public audiences. An example is an article in the Outdoors section of the local newspaper regarding protecting a particular habitat which is aimed at creating demand among hunters and anglers. Or a story on your public radio station aimed at suburban mothers, regarding the potential health risks to children from a certain pesticide. Even if you are targeting an outlet with a very broad audience (the local evening TV news), your goal is to reach only a designated portion of that audience — your strategic targets (women 25-40 years old) — and your story must be tailored accordingly.

In developing an idea for media coverage, try to conceptualize the end result. See the headline for your story. Hear the 30-second soundbite on the evening news. Visualize the photographs. When you have a clear, concise, and compelling idea of exactly what you hope to accomplish, you can then work to make it happen.

Dealing with the Media

A reporter's job is to fill time (on radio and TV) or space (in newspapers, magazines, and online). Your job is to make sure they fill it with your story. This means using every opportunity to show that your story meets their needs. No reporter or editor wants to spend precious time covering a story, only to find out that there was little news value for their effort.

Making a Story 'Newsworthy'

Here are the basic components of a "newsworthy" story:

NEW — To get their attention, your story should be current, timely, and fresh. It is a late-breaking development, something happening right now, a steaming hot entrée — not reheated leftovers.

LOCAL — It should tie into what is going on in that particular community. Even if you are releasing a national report or talking about federal legislation, find a local angle, such as its potential impact on a local river or your region's air quality.

HUMAN INTEREST — Try to put a human face on your story, such as a fisherman who fishes in the local river that is threatened with pollution, a local child who suffers asthma attacks on bad smog days, etc. Again, each story should have a victim, a villain, a problem, a hero, and a plot resolution.

APPEALS TO WHAT REPORTERS LOVE — Stories that are filled with conflict, controversy, contradictions, and colorful quotes and images.

Doing the Legwork

In addition, it is important to remember that reporters are busy professionals. The more you can assist them in doing the footwork, the more likely they are to use your stories. At the beginning of the campaign, you should distribute press kits with information about the issue at stake, what you're trying to accomplish, a list of your coalition partners, etc. A few days later, the designated spokesperson for the campaign should follow up and see if the reporter has any questions. He should then maintain contact throughout the campaign, not only to pitch specific stories, but also to provide research, offer quotes for other articles, distribute copies of Sierra, The Planet, your chapter's newsletters, etc. Occasionally, give someone a "scoop" that none of the other outlets will have. The goal is to become a respected, responsible news source. Developing and sustaining good working relationships will be a vital component to generating positive press attention for your campaign's activities.

Talking With the Press

Here are six rules to follow when talking with reporters and other representatives of the media:

- ☐ Nothing is ever "off the record" — If you want something to be off the record, do not tell a reporter.

- ☐ Stick to the message — It is a reporter's job to frame a story in a way that is newsworthy and interesting. A reporter may ask you questions that appear intrusive, leading, biased, or inflammatory. If that happens, remember: stick to your message. Use your answer time to move the conversation back to what you want to talk about. It is difficult to master finessing those kinds of transitions, so it is worthwhile for you to practice with a colleague when an important interview is anticipated.

- ☐ Always meet deadlines — If you want press coverage of an event, plan it to accommodate the deadlines of the media outlets that you expect to cover the story. Generally, media events should be planned for the morning, in order for both print and electronic reporters to meet their deadlines.

- ☐ Be prepared — Anticipate questions reporters might ask, and have fact sheets available that respond to those issues. If unanticipated questions are raised that you cannot answer on the spot, ask the reporter when his deadline is, promise that you'll get him the information he needs within that time frame, and follow through with that commitment.

- ☐ Be honest — Never misrepresent information to a reporter. If you do, you will destroy your personal credibility, and possibly the Sierra Club's credibility with that reporter. Reporters do not want to receive misleading, false, or inaccurate information.

- ☐ Be quotable — This can mean being clever, insightful, or humorous, but it always means being brief. If you talk for 10 minutes or issue a three-page press release, the reporter or editor gets to decide how she will quote you. If you limit your comments to a few sentences, you get to decide the message that is printed or aired.

Timing Your Media Coverage

While the substance of the story you tell in the media is important, so is its timing. Media can be strategically timed to create a drumbeat, to raise both awareness of and intensity around an issue within a particularly advantageous period of time. For example, a series of media hits — a paid ad that generates a news story, radio talk show interviews, letters-to-the-editor, etc. — can be timed to culminate during a congressional recess, when members are back in their districts and most sensitive to local news and constituent pressure.

Using Other Messengers Besides the Sierra Club

Although we want to make getting the Sierra Club out in the public in a visible manner a priority, often it is more appropriate and/or effective to pitch a news story from a source other than the Sierra Club. Enlist the help of your various coalition partners and allies in this campaign, and see what type of media these organizations can generate, based on their various resources (i.e. money, people, and connections). Think about other credible messengers you might employ — university professors, doctors, teachers, small business owners, farmers, sportsmen, etc. Remember: Stories that never mention the Sierra Club can still be highly advantageous to your effort.

Proactive vs. Reactive Media

Your earned media program should include a certain set of aggressive, proactive tactics you will execute, as well as a reactive media strategy, for responding to new developments in the course of the campaign. Assign a group of activists to serve as the campaign's "rapid response team." This group will be responsible for monitoring the coverage of your issue in all of the targeted media outlets (news stories, editorials, letters-to-the-editor, etc.), keeping track of the opposition (their public events, campaign literature, funding sources, etc.), generally keeping a lookout for any and all disseminated misinformation that warrants a rebuttal. (Hopefully, you will have the authority to develop and distribute the Sierra Club's response.) Then, make sure that you build the time and flexibility into your earned media program for your reactive, as well as proactive, work.

Executing Your Earned Media Program

Once you have finalized your earned media plan, one person should be put in charge of overseeing its execution. This is generally the only individual on the campaign who has the authorization to speak to the media on behalf of the campaign. Clearly, all dedicated volunteers can participate in radio call-in shows, attend press conferences, and submit letters-to-the-editor. But the designated spokesperson should always supervise these activities to ensure that message discipline is enforced, and should make all official statements to reporters.

Using More Expensive Communication Tactics

Most grassroots campaigns must rely heavily on the earned media coverage they gain through a lot of hard work and effort, because they do not have the budget for much paid advertising. Therefore, we won't be going into a lot of detail here about paid advertising, but just providing a general overview.

The major benefit of paid advertising is that you have total control over the content and the placement of the ad. Since you are buying the time or space, you can decide exactly what the ad will say, and where it will run. Paid ads are a guaranteed way to get your message and story out exactly the way you want it, to exactly the right decision-makers and/or demographic audiences. However, paid ads, as the name indicates, cost money. In addition to the cost of the actual ad, you should have the ad designed by a political consultant, and you will need a professional ad buyer to ensure that you are reaching the audiences you want to reach in the most efficient way. Television ads are particularly expensive, often too expensive for most Sierra Club campaigns, but radio spots, newspaper ads, and persuasion mail can be very affordable — particularly if you are trying to reach a very targeted audience.

Here is a brief run-down on the various types of paid media, as well as their different strengths and weaknesses:

TELEVISION — This is, by far, the most expensive communication medium, but usually the most effective. If you are going to do any television advertising, you should work with the national Sierra Club press office or hire a professional media consultant. Their fees generally include both producing a 30-second spot, as well as a 10–15 percent mark-up on your total media buy (if you purchase $50,000 of air time, the media consultant will charge you another $5,000–$7,500). Your media buy will need to be at least 500 gross rating points (GRPs) per week, enough so that the average viewer will see the spot at least five times and fully absorb the message. Cable TV, which is not nearly as expensive as network TV, does not reach as many people, but can be good for targeting certain demographic groups (women watching "Lifetime," anglers watching the Bass Cable Network, etc.). Prices for both network and cable TV vary widely according to the media market.

RADIO — This is a cheaper medium, and can be a more targeted way to broadcast your campaign message. Since this is an audio-only medium, the spots must be very engaging, with attention-getting sound effects, humor, and/or compelling voices. Again, you will need to enlist help from the national press office or hire a local media consultant (preferably one who specializes in radio), who will produce high-quality spots and make your buy. Your spots will need to be heard at least five times by the average listener to penetrate, and should be strategically placed to reach your target audiences (the morning news during rush-hour to reach suburban commuters, hip-hop stations to reach young African-Americans, etc.). Your radio buy will need to be at least 100–125 GRPs per week. Radio stations should have demographic analysis available regarding their listeners. Radio prices also vary according to the region of the country, and from station to station.

PERSUASION MAIL — There are many different kinds of mailings you might send to your membership during the course of a grassroots campaign — fundraising solicitations, volunteer recruitment, calls to action, etc. But "persuasion mail" refers to glossy brochures that are designed specifically to influence swing targets among the general public. This type of communication is more personal than TV or radio and can also be tailored to very select groups of people (women 25–40 who voted in the last two elections, men over 50 who live in rural areas, members of other environmental organizations, etc.). To be effective, however, the mail must actually be read, rather than immediately deposited in the trash. This will require making your printed materials as visually engaging and emotionally compelling as a television spot. This will entail utilizing the services of the national office or hiring a professional mail consultant. Persuasive direct mail can cost anywhere from 30–50 cents per piece, depending upon your printing specifications, postage rate, volume, etc.

NEWSPAPER ADS — Most people skim right over newspaper advertising, unless they are looking for something in particular, such as a car or major appliance. Nobody is shopping for information about your grassroots campaign. If you decide to do this type of advertising, you will need to maximize its impact by making sure you buy a significant amount of space in a publication that attracts your strategic targets, and that your ad includes eye-catching visuals, as well as very clear, concise, and compelling copy. Again, prices will vary according to both the specific publication, the size of your ad, and its placement.

BILLBOARDS — Of all the various types of paid media, this is the least targeted. However, billboards, used in concert with other advertising, can be highly effective and cost efficient as part of creating "a buzz" about your campaign. To accomplish this, they must be strategically placed, eye-catching, convey a story, and get people talking. If your campaign is being waged in an urban area and you are targeting commuters, you may also want to consider buying bus boards.

If you are interested in learning more about these types of communication tactics, please contact the national press office, and we will be happy to assist you.

THE SIERRA CLUB TACTICS CRITERIA CHECK-LIST

Before committing to any particular activity, always ask yourself the following 10 questions:

- ☐ Which specific goal do we hope to achieve through this activity?
- ☐ Who is our target for this tactic — among the identified decision-makers, audience, and/or media outlets?
- ☐ How will this tactic communicate our campaign's message?
- ☐ Will this activity alienate any of our strategic targets or hurt our organization's overall credibility?
- ☐ Do we have the time, money, and people necessary to execute this tactic, and is it worth the investment of these limited resources?
- ☐ If we are planning on securing press attention with this tactic, is this really "newsworthy"?
- ☐ How will our coalition partners be contributing to this effort (in terms of money, people, and connections)?
- ☐ Will this be fun? Will it sufficiently engage and inspire our base of supporters?
- ☐ Is this tactic simple, achievable, and effective?
- ☐ How will this activity set us up for our next one, in terms of strengthening our organization, creating demand and/or accountability, and building momentum?

If you cannot satisfactorily answer all 10 of these questions for a given activity — don't do it. It is very easy for a group of activists to get carried away with a clever idea, without fully weighing its ultimate strategic value. This can not only end up being wasteful; sometimes, the ploy can actually backfire, and cost the campaign much-needed credibility and support. We therefore encourage you to be creative and have fun with your tactics, but also caution you to keep your strategy, message, and targets firmly in mind.

Additional Advice on Planning Your Tactics

Here are a few more pointers for you regarding tactics:

- ☐ Be realistic about what you can accomplish. Underestimate how many phone calls you will be able to make, how many people will show up at an event, how many volunteers will follow through with their commitments, etc. In other words, expect the worse, and you will always be pleasantly surprised.

- ☐ When planning an event confirm, re-confirm, and confirm everything once again. Make reminder calls to your volunteers. Check the site well in advance. Make sure you have the necessary permits. Don't leave anything to chance.

- ☐ Incorporate the ask-thank-inform-involve cycle into every activity you plan.

- ☐ On the day of an event, the organizers should always bring plenty of cellular phones, signs, duct tape, and American (or your state) flags.

- ☐ Think about how you can make your direct-action tactics serve as visibility events. For example, if you are planning a door-to-door lit drop, have a pre-drop "pep rally" where you have a few speeches, and invite the press.

- ☐ Look for ways to include your coalition partners as much as possible in all of your activities. These other organizations can be extremely valuable in contributing their resources (money, people, and connections), strengthening your credibility, and broadening your profile. Sharing the burden will also mean sharing the credit, but remember — the ultimate goal is for all of you to share in the victory.

- ☐ Be creative — but then also stick with a good thing. Don't just keep recycling the same old, tired tactics just because "that's how we've always done it here." Look in past issues of The Planet for new ideas and take some risks. Through trying out more innovative and ambitious tactics, your campaign may not only receive more attention, but will also help you develop a stronger, more skillful organization for the future. Then, once you have achieved success with a creative tactic, do it again next year.

- ☐ Remember to build in some flexibility for reactive activities — holding a press conference to respond to an allegation by your opposition, having a demonstration outside the office of a turn-coat decision-maker, publicizing new research you uncover about your issue, etc. You want to make sure that you have the time, people, money, and energy available for these types of activities, as well as your proactive events.

- ☐ Choose the sites for your public events very carefully. Here are some criteria to consider:

  ACCESSIBILITY — Make sure it is close to public transportation, has ample parking, is wheelchair accessible, has restroom facilities, is convenient for the media, is near your activist base.

  TIMING — Choose a day of the week and a time of day that will maximize participation and media coverage.

  SYMBOLISM — Pick a setting that reflects your message, makes sense, will look good on TV or in photos, and will, ideally, have an emotional impact on the immediate audience.

  SIZE — Make sure you can realistically fill the space and make it look crowded, for the benefit of both the immediate audience and the press coverage.

  DIVERSITY — Try, both in your site selection and event planning process, to attract a diverse audience, including children, seniors, people of color, professionals, blue-collar workers, etc.

  STAGING — Figure out how well the site fits your needs in terms of podiums, audio/visual equipment, a place for a band, where you will hang banners and flags, etc.

  COSTS — Take into consideration user fees, transportation expenses, city permits, etc.

  FLEXIBILITY — Always have a contingency plan for bad weather.

Creating a Campaign Timeline

Once you have brainstormed a wide variety of ideas for tactics, spend some time evaluating and re-evaluating each of them for their feasibility, effectiveness, and strategic value. Make sure you have the "right mix." For example, you may discover that you have 10 different tactics for accountability, but only two for creating demand. Obviously, that won't work, since you can't possibly do that much accountability work with the decision-makers until you've generated more demand throughout the community. Or perhaps you will find that you have three tactics that are targeted to hunters and anglers, but none for women 25–40 years old. This won't work either, since you will generally need to have at least three different tactics aimed at each of your different strategic targets (among the decision-makers and the campaign's audiences) to make sure your message penetrates. Or maybe you forgot one of the key media outlets. Keep reworking your tactics list until you are confident that all of your bases are covered and you have what it takes to meet your goals.

Once you have finalized all of your campaign tactics, it is time to construct a campaign timeline. (Remember: "If it ain't written, it ain't a plan.") Using a regular calendar, write in all of the various activities, and then draw lines to indicate exactly when they will take place. Next to the activity, write in the name of the person who will be coordinating that activity. This will include general activities ("start recruiting volunteers"), as well as specific events ("hold press conference at toxic-waste site"). You may discover as you do this that your timeline is not feasible, that you don't have enough activities planned to win, or (much more likely) that you have more activities than you can actually do, given your resources and time constraints. As we have stated many times, one of your most difficult challenges will be to strike the right balance between being ambitious and being realistic. Creating a comprehensive timeline will definitely elucidate that challenge in a graphic way for you, and help you find that middle ground.

In addition to listing each activity, also indicate on your campaign timeline the specific individual who will be responsible for each activity. This will help you to evaluate you have enough people to cover all your tactics, as well as serve as a way of documenting each person's commitment to the effort. Throughout the campaign, you will still need to produce updated "to do" lists on a regular basis to keep track of things. But this initial timeline will prove very valuable in giving the entire team a shared understanding of the overall rhythm of the campaign and what lies ahead.

CHAPTER 8

Managing Your Money

In running a grassroots organizing campaign, you'll invariably find yourself wanting more of two things — money and people. Skillful resource management is one of the most important and challenging aspects of grassroots organizing. If you are disciplined about your allocation, that will go a long way in maximizing both the efficiency and efficacy of your campaign. In the next two chapters, we address the final components of your plan: fundraising and budgeting, and volunteer recruitment and stewardship.

Writing a Fundraising Plan

Once you have determined what specific type of funding you will be using for a particular campaign, and how much is available, you will probably need to start thinking about how much more money you may be able to raise for this effort. When developing your fundraising plan, the key is to be ambitious but realistic. Your written fundraising plan should establish an overall financial goal for the campaign, as well as goals by source (different accounts, organizations, and individuals) and solicitation method (mail solicitations, neighborhood coffees, and "dialing for dollars" phonebanks). Your plan should also include the costs involved with each fundraising activity, as it generally costs money to raise money.

There are three very easy components to successful fundraising:

□ Knowing Who to Ask

Who has money to spare? Who has a vested interest in the outcome of this campaign? Who can be persuaded to contribute? Make lists, starting with the easiest targets (your family, close friends, other Club members, colleagues at work, etc.), and then move outward toward more distant targets (members of similar organizations, community leaders, politicians, etc.).

□ Knowing What to Ask

How much can this particular individual contribute? It is generally advisable to aim too high and flatter people with your overestimation of their personal wealth than to aim too low and end up with much less than they were prepared to give. If you ask for $50, they might end up giving you $25. But if you ask for $25, you can bet they won't offer you $50.

□ Asking

Asking for money has bad connotations if all you think about is someone with his hand out. Instead of "Buddy, can you spare a dime," it's "Say, I know how you can make a really valuable investment in the protection of our environment!" Always ask for a specific amount, and if they say yes, ask them to write out a check right then, or find out when and how you can pick it up, and then follow through.

Developing a Campaign Budget

Any experienced manager will tell you that the single most important piece of paper in the entire campaign plan is the budget. This document translates the campaign's strategy into dollars and cents, clearly setting forth exactly how you will invest your energy, and how you will not.

Determining your campaign's budget is an evolutionary and dynamic — not a linear — process. Generally speaking, it is advised that you first begin by writing out a fundraising plan to assess your total revenue. Second, draft a budget to determine your various expenses. Third, keep going back and forth between these two documents, until you have reconciled all the numbers. If you have more expenses than income — which is usually the case — can you raise some more money, or will you have to eliminate some of your more costly tactics? If you have a fundraising plan that brings in more money than the campaign needs — usually not the case — are you sure you're being realistic about what you can raise and/or what you'll need to spend? Continue this process until you have arrived at numbers that are both achievable and sufficient to secure victory.

Once you have determined a bold but realistic goal for the campaign's overall revenue, you can begin drafting a budget. Start by reviewing each component of your campaign plan, and carefully calculate the anticipated costs for each activity. *Don't just assign random, ballpark figures; itemize each expenditure.* For example, make some phone calls and find out exactly how much it will cost to buy postcards, yard signs, buttons, etc. Put any donated, "in-kind" contributions in parentheses, such as refreshments for volunteers or free phones, but always include them for accounting purposes.

The single most important piece of paper in the entire campaign plan is the budget.

As you add to the budget, ask yourself these three questions:

Is this expenditure really necessary?

Which specific strategic goal does this investment further?

Is there a free or cheaper way to do this?

If, for example, you find yourself responding with, "Well, it's not really part of the strategy, but so-and-so really thinks it's a good idea..." — *cut it.*

It is always a good idea to make sure that your final budget includes a contingency fund of approximately 5–10 percent of your overall fundraising goal. Even after your budget is finalized, unexpected expenditures will arise. But every time they do, ask yourself, "What specific strategic goal will this expenditure further? Is there a better investment I could make? If I write this check and we don't raise any additional money, what am I willing to sacrifice?"

Developing and managing a budget is about making tough choices, exercising self-discipline, and maintaining a razor-sharp strategic focus.

Creating a Cashflow Chart

Once you have finalized your fundraising plan and budget, you should create a cashflow chart, showing exactly how much money will be coming in when, and how much money will be going out when. Your cashflow should be monitored on a regular basis throughout the campaign to ensure that you will reach your ultimate goal, and have the available cash on hand when expenses arise. If you fall behind, you will need to either redouble your fundraising efforts or reduce your campaign budget.

Managing Different Kinds of Money

Nonprofit organizations like the Sierra Club rely on contributions from members, high-dollar donors, and foundations to support their work. These contributions can take three basic forms and must be strictly segregated to prevent violations of state and federal tax law. In plain English, the three funding types are "non-tax-deductible," "tax-deductible," and "electioneering" money. You will hear many different terms to refer to these funds, and it is important to be familiar with them.

Non-Tax-Deductible Funds

This kind of income is also referred to as "hard dollars," "501(c)(4) money," "(c)(4) money," or "lobbying" funds. 501(c)(4) and (c)(4) both refer to the section of the Internal Revenue Code that defines charitable organizations and activities for which donations are not tax-deductible. The Sierra Club is a nonprofit, 501(c)(4) organization. This means that the Sierra Club is exempt from paying federal income tax, but contributions that are made to the organization by individuals, foundations, or corporations, and membership dues paid to the Club, are not tax-deductible. The Sierra Club is not limited in the amount of lobbying it may conduct and is free to advocate a particular point of view even on controversial issues, as long as the issues are related to the primary purpose of the organization. (C)(4) organizations may also engage in political campaign activities through an affiliated political action committee (PAC) fund, although this cannot be the primary purpose of the organization. Foundations generally do not give contributions for this type of work, and money from The Sierra Club Foundation cannot be used for these purposes (see section on "tax-deductible" funds below). "Hard dollars" can be spent for both tax-deductible and non-tax-deductible purposes. The Sierra Club applies this money to activities such as legislative lobbying, certain administrative electoral activities (other electoral activities can only be paid for with PAC funds), and Sierra Club internal business, which cannot be funded with tax-deductible donations.

How Non-Tax-Deductible Funds Can Be Used:

☐ LOBBYING

Lobbying is defined as any attempt to influence legislation through either: (a) direct communications with any member or staff of a legislative body (direct lobbying); or (b) efforts to educate the general public about a legislative issue, expressing a position on that issue, and urging them to contact the member or staff of a legislative body (indirect lobbying). "Legislation" is defined as action by the U.S. Congress, any state legislature, any local council or similar legislative body, or by the public in a referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. Actions to influence the introduction of legislation, as well as support or opposition to any specific legislative proposal, even when the bill has not yet been introduced, also constitute lobbying. Legislation also includes providing advice on administrative treaties or judicial appointments.

☐ DIRECT LOBBYING VS. INDIRECT LOBBYING

"Direct lobbying" is an attempt to influence legislation by communicating with members or staff of a legislative body (Congress, a state legislature, or local council) or government employees who participate in the legislative process, to encourage them to introduce, support, oppose, repeal, or otherwise influence legislation. The principal purpose of the communication must be to influence legislation. Telephone calls, letters, and office visits to a member of Congress, testimony at a public hearing (unless in response to a written request by a legislative committee), or publication of materials to encourage passage of a bill are all lobbying activities if:

> They include a reference to specific legislation;
>
> They present a particular point of view on a piece of legislation; *and*
>
> They are addressed or given to a legislator, an employee of a legislative body, or other government official participating in the formulation of legislation.

"Indirect lobbying" entails encouraging the general public to take action with respect to specific legislation. For example, sending letters to a senator's constituents requesting that they write to the senator to oppose a piece of legislation is grassroots lobbying if the letters contain all three of the following elements:

A reference to specific legislation;

A reflection of a view on the legislation; *and*

A "call to action" such as:
- Encouraging recipients to contact legislators;
- Providing a legislator's name, address, and phone number;
- Providing a petition tear-off postcard to send to a legislator; *or*

Identifying a legislator as being opposed to a particular view, undecided, the recipient's legislator, or a member of the committee or subcommittee that will consider the legislation. Identifying the sponsor of legislation is *not* a call to action.

☐ TRAINING

This entails activist training in lobbying or political skills, where specific legislative actions or general electoral skills are the content of the training.

☐ MEMBERSHIP DRIVES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF NON–501(C)(3) ENTITIES

This includes organizational meetings or other costs of running or maintaining the organization, as well as pamphlets, advertising, or newsletter articles whose primary purpose is new-member solicitation.

☐ OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Purchases and repairs of office equipment are paid for with hard dollars, because it is used to conduct both tax-deductible and non-tax deductible activities.

Tax-Deductible Funds

This kind of income is also referred to as "soft dollars," "501(c)(3) money," "(c)(3) money," or "foundation" money. 501(c)(3) and (c)(3) both refer to the section of the Internal Revenue Code that defines charitable organizations and activities that can be supported with tax-deductible contributions. The Sierra Club Foundation (TSCF) is a nonprofit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization. This means that TSCF: is exempt from federal income tax; engages in educational, religious, scientific, or other charitable activities (environmental); and contributions or grants by individuals, foundations, or corporations are deductible for federal income tax purposes under section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Code. The Sierra Club must apply to TSCF for money to reimburse expenses of Sierra Club projects that qualify as tax-deductible activity expenses. This money must be used only for charitable/educational purposes, and these purposes must be documented in order to receive/spend these funds.

How Tax Deductible-Funds Can Be Used:

☐ PUBLIC-INTEREST LITIGATION

This involves the enforcement of laws protecting the natural environment, including appeals based on environmental impact statements, open-space regulations, etc.

DAN MILLER

For Our Families, For Our Future: Young and old alike rallied for environmental protection in Salt Lake City before delivering doorhangers to thousands of households.

☐ CONSERVATION ACTION

This is defined as efforts to implement existing laws to protect the natural and human environment for the benefit of the general public. This includes meeting and working with government agencies charged with implementing environmental laws (for example, members of the executive branch of the government). This administrative "lobbying" or "advocacy" is not considered lobbying in the IRS sense (see definition provided above). The expenses for these visits, including materials, travel, etc., can be paid for with "soft" dollars.

Things to Remember:

Avoid meetings with elected officials where the topic either includes or might include legislation or legislative proposals. It is okay to speak with legislators about implementing existing laws or about issues of broad community concern that might eventually need legislation passed, but conversations about legislation or legislative proposals are lobbying.

☐ PUBLIC EDUCATION

This involves educating members of the media or the general public about nature and environmental problems and the need to protect the human and natural environment. "Educational" is defined as "a full and fair exposition of the facts." Outings where significant training and/or learning occur are also activities that can be funded with tax deductible funds. Public education can include education about the impacts of passing new legislation, as long as this education does not include certain prohibited components that constitute lobbying under IRS rules (e.g., "a call to action").

Things to Remember:

Don't discuss candidates for public office, their records, or qualifications within 90 days of any primary or general election.

Don't try a "tag team" approach. This is when the host of the event educates the public about a legislative matter, avoiding a "legislative call to action" — and then plants either a later speaker or a member of the audience to urge the audience to contact their legislator. This tactic is considered lobbying by the IRS.

Don't use public education events to do other business of the Sierra Club, such as electioneering activity, fundraising, membership recruitment, and/or organizational business.

☐ PUBLICATIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF

This includes any materials that serve to educate the public, but which do not advocate support for a specific legislative proposal. If a publication includes both lobbying and educational information, only that portion that is educational can be funded with 501(c)(3) money. If a publication contains any electioneering activities, the entire publication is ineligible for 501(c)(3) funding.

Things to Remember:

Materials that are originally created using (c)(3) funds cannot subsequently be used for direct lobbying or other non (c)(3) activities, unless the original material was distributed to a wide market and made available to the general public.

Public-education ads or other mass-distributed materials need to be reviewed in advance by Compliance Review *(compliance.review@sierraclub.org).*

☐ RESEARCH

This includes the investigation and preparation of facts for objective analysis and study, such as timber-harvest data and geological analysis.

☐ SKILLS TRAINING, WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, AND SEMINARS

This money can be used for issue education and training in leadership skills, conservation skills, project planning, and evaluation. It can also be used for training programs that concern general public education campaigns, but not those that involve working for or against a specific legislative proposal.

Making It Clear: The Difference Between 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) Money

501(c)(3)	501(c)(4)
Charitable funds	Non-charitable funds
Tax deduction for the donor	No tax deduction for the donor
Cannot be used for legislative lobbying, electioneering activity business	Can be used for most purposes, including lobbying activity and certain Sierra Club administrative electoral expenses, except for electioneering activities
Easier to raise	More difficult to raise
More difficult to spend	Easier to spend
The Sierra Club Foundation	Sierra Club

Things to Remember:
When planning the event, be careful how you structure the meeting if it is to contain both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) aspects. Set the agenda to have a clear break between the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) sections.

Train around skills, not organization-specific procedures. If your workshop is on membership development, teach it as a skill useful for any person and any organization, not just on how to increase the Sierra Club's membership.

By agreement with TSCF, we do not teach people electoral campaign skills. The Sierra Club has a PAC and such training might be viewed as TSCF helping the PAC. Such help is expressly prohibited by the IRS.

By agreement with TSCF, 501(c)(3) funds cannot be used to train people in skills on how to lobby, even when there are no instructions or information about a specific lobbying campaign.

☐ PURCHASE AND PRESERVATION OF LAND

This is usually done to maintain trails or purchase interpretive signs or other amenities for wilderness areas and parks, but in rare cases funds are used to purchase land or support other groups seeking to do so.

☐ FUNDRAISING

This refers to some expenses incurred from raising tax-deductible contributions.

☐ SOCIAL WELFARE

Activities such as Inner City Outings qualify for tax-deductible funding under this category, as they promote social welfare and further the common good.

☐ GRANTS TO CHARITABLE 501(C)(3) INSTITUTIONS

What 501(c)(3) Money *cannot* be used for:

legislative lobbying
electioneering activities
Sierra Club internal business

Electioneering Funds

This kind of income is a special form of non-tax-deductible contributions to a segregated fund. It is restricted for use in electioneering activity and is managed by the Sierra Club Political Committee (SCPC). It is also referred to as "PAC" money and "restricted election funds." Careful reporting and management of this money is particularly important, as it is governed by separate (and often very different) state and federal campaign-finance laws. State election money must be segregated from federal election money, and is managed by separate state and federal PACs.

How Electioneering Funds Can Be Used:

☐ ELECTION WORK THAT FOCUSES SPECIFICALLY ON SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO A SPECIFIC CANDIDATE

This may include speaking on behalf of or against a candidate, printing and/or distributing literature about a candidate, holding a press conference about the elections, or a variety of other election-related activities. Because of the complexity of campaign-finance laws, the level of scrutiny of such expenditures, and the potentially serious consequences for mismanaging these funds (including criminal penalties and jail sentences), only the SCPC (for federal campaigns) or the chapter director (for state or local campaigns) may make spending decisions regarding these funds. No electoral expenses should be incurred without their express approval. If in doubt about whether an expense item is likely to be an electoral expense, contact one of these people first.

CHAPTER 9

Managing People

Clearly, some of the most important elements of a successful grassroots organizing campaign are recruiting, training, and mobilizing supporters to volunteer their time, energy, and talent to your cause. You can develop a superb strategy and craft a marvelous message — but if you don't have the forces necessary to actually implement your plan, it's all rather moot.

The recipe for successfully managing your volunteers is simple: *ask, thank, inform,* and *involve.* We can't say it enough. As a Sierra Club leader, you should internalize these four components of the organization-building cycle, and actively incorporate them into all of your interactions with other members.

Recruiting Volunteers

This is the *ask* part of the organization-building cycle. If you have picked an issue that people can get excited about and relate to, then recruitment will be easier. If you have picked an obscure issue, recruitment will be much more difficult.

The three principles of volunteer recruitment are the same as fundraising:

□ Asking

A good ask has the following components:

INTRODUCTION — "I'm Emily. I'm a volunteer with the local John Muir Group of the Sierra Club. Thanks for signing our clean-water petition at the grocery story last weekend and for indicating that you would like more information. Are you concerned about the quality of Austin's drinking water?"

PROBLEM — "As you heard at the grocery store, Austin's main drinking water supply, the Edward's Aquifer, is at risk of serious contamination if the Texasville Housing Complex is approved for development. Have you been reading about this in the paper?"

SOLUTION — "The Planning and Zoning Commission will be meeting in three weeks to vote on the permit application for the Texasville complex. We know that three key supervisors are still undecided, and with their support we can defeat the development. Have you been to a Planning Commission hearing before?"

OPPOSITION — "The Austin Real Estate Association has been lobbying these members of the Planning Commission heavily and will be out in full force at the hearing."

REQUEST — "We need citizens such as yourself to attend the hearing and let the commission know that you want our water protected. Can we count on you to attend?"

□ Knowing Who to Ask

Brainstorm with your planning group on ways to obtain lists of potential volunteers. These could include: outings lists; sign-up sheets from Sierra Club events; student groups at local universities; the friends, co-workers, and/or family members of current volunteers, etc.

□ Knowing What to Ask

Most volunteers today want to start off with short-term volunteer opportunities. Because of the rapid pace and limited time in many people's lives today, organizations need to become more adept at sequencing volunteers in and out of organizations and developing systems to re-engage people after they have been on a volunteer sabbatical due to other life pressures. Too often, a brand new volunteer is asked to be conservation chair or take on another time-consuming leadership position right off the bat. Try to refrain from the risk of overwhelming a new volunteer in order to fit an open position.

MARION TRIESTE

Clean Air Now: Former Sierra Student Coalition President Kim Mowery and a masked accomplice rally for clean air outside an EPA hearing in Boston in early 1997.

Interviewing Volunteers

If a potential volunteer is planning to contribute a significant amount of time, you will want to conduct an interview with him. If you don't have the time or people required for this, it can be done through questionnaires, but face-to-face meetings are preferable.

At the interview, get to know what motivates your potential volunteers. (Are they trying to acquire new skills? Make new friends? Feel part of a group?) As we discussed in chapter 2, it is important to match your volunteers with tasks that meet their needs, utilize their skills, and maximize their potential. To this end, you might ask:

Why did you decide to volunteer?
What attracts you to volunteering with the Sierra Club?
What would you like to get from your volunteering experience?
What skills do you have to contribute here?
What do you like to do?
What type of tasks would you like to avoid?

This interview is also to *inform* your volunteers. Use this interview to explain the mission of the group, to provide them with details of your current campaign, to describe available volunteer opportunities, etc. You should have a list of at least three possible tasks (with job descriptions) for them to choose from. If you are really impressed by an individual, start by asking her to do the one with the greatest time commitment and responsibility, and then move down the list, if she says no.

Training Volunteers

Once someone has made a commitment to volunteer, it is important to sufficiently train, orient, and *involve* her in the tasks she will be expected to perform. Clearly, the level of training required depends on what you are asking her to do. For example, if you are asking a volunteer to phone bank, have her come in 30 minutes early. Go over what is going on in the campaign, explain the goals of this particular activity and how it fits in, and then role-play to help prepare her for various questions he might get asked. Never under-prepare a new volunteer for the task you are asking her to perform. It is the fastest way to lose her forever.

Appreciating Volunteers

Arguably the most important part of the organization-building cycle is to *thank* your volunteers. This is one of the best ways we can work to develop connection — that special feeling that keeps people attached and committed to the Sierra Club. It is the most precious and fragile resource we have as an organization, and we must all continually look for ways to reinforce and strengthen those bonds. Let volunteers know how much you value them.

Some of the tangible ways you might express this appreciation include:

- hand out "freebies" (a free scoop of ice cream, donated from a local store)
- host special gatherings, such as teas, luncheons, dinners, holiday parties, or birthday celebrations
- provide letters of recommendation for employers or college applications
- publish thank-yous in the local newspaper
- display photos of volunteers around the office
- give volunteers Sierra Club T-shirts, key chains, or certificates of appreciation

Some of the more intangible ways you can show your appreciation is to:

- □ always call a volunteer by her name
- □ inquire about her level of satisfaction with her volunteer experience and address any concerns she might have
- □ say "thank you" each and every time she volunteers
- □ ask for her ideas and opinions
- □ include her in relevant decision-making
- □ give her new responsibilities and challenges when she has proven her abilities and is interested
- □ create a pleasant working environment
- □ maintain a personal interest in her
- □ keep her informed

People continue to volunteer and increase their level of commitment when they feel they are part of something big and important. Their good heart will inspire them to volunteer; yours will keep them working. Do everything you can to develop a sense of belonging, family, shared vision, success, fun, and connection.

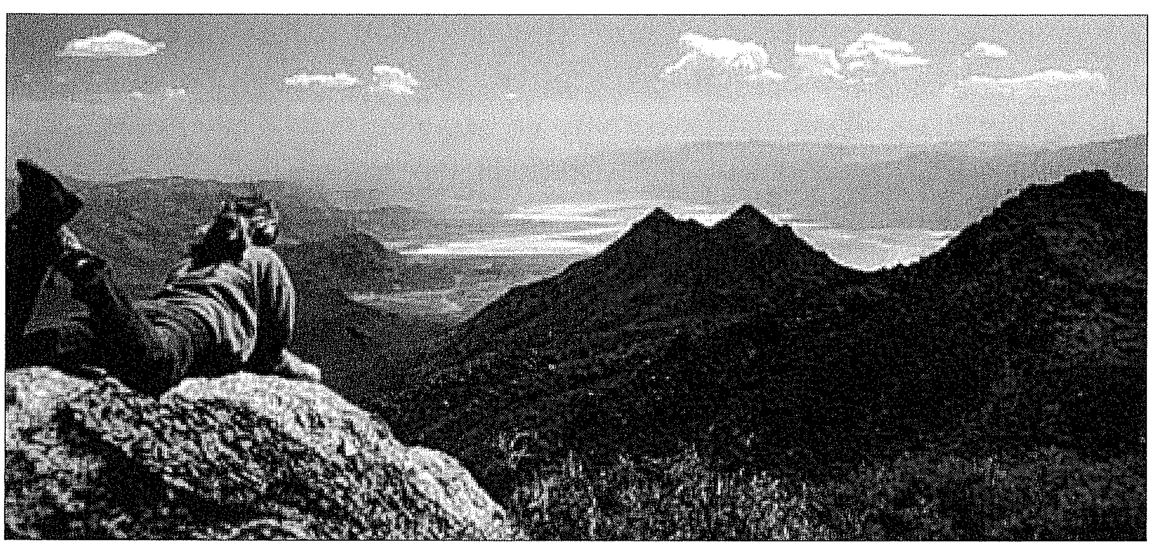
Defining Roles and Responsibilities

During the campaign planning process, it is important to define exactly who will be responsible for what. Spell out exactly what the campaign manager, press secretary, volunteer coordinator, research director, etc. will do. Some people may object to giving out titles and say things like: "Oh, let's just all do a little bit of everything. After all, this is a grassroots campaign!" Don't fall into that trap. Specifying individual responsibilities up-front (who has the authority to talk to the press, and who does not) will help hold people accountable, and alleviate ugly turf wars later on. If your campaign involves a coalition of different organizations, this is even more critical. From the onset, make it clear which group will handle which task, how often the coalition will meet, how key decisions will be made, how the flow of information will be managed, etc. Your ability to work efficiently and cooperatively as a team under stressful conditions will prove vital. Strong leadership, careful planning, and a shared vision are all essential components of successful grassroots organizing.

Now Go Out and Do It!

You now have your blueprint for victory. Your written campaign plan lays out the why, who, what, when, where, and how of your entire endeavor. Now it is time to "just do it." If you follow what you have planned — maintaining a focus on your strategy, enforcing message discipline, following the specified guidelines for your tactics — we are confident that you will run an efficient and effective campaign. Keep the faith, work hard, have fun — and you will win!

Meanwhile, we thank you for the valuable contribution you are making to "Protecting Our Environment — For Our Families, For Our Future."



VIEW FROM KUMIVA PEAK IN NEVADA ■ GREG EBNER

APPENDIX

Media Know-How

Radio Interviews

A radio actuality is a pre-recorded, brief statement or interview for radio stations to use during their news broadcasts. An actuality requires having the technology to tape the statement (a high-quality tape recorder and microphone) and to transmit the statement over the phone (a device called a phone patch which connects to your phone to transmit the recording without losing sound quality.) Many public relations agencies have this technology. Without the technology, you can still get radio news coverage the old-fashioned way: by calling the news director of each station and doing as many one-on-one interviews as possible. Be sure your spokesperson is polished and can deliver a colorful soundbite.

Helpful Hints

PURSUE THE STATIONS — If you know of an upcoming event, alert the radio station ahead of time with a news advisory and be sure to follow up with a phone call. Be aware that radio news directors often do not have time to attend news conferences or public hearings. You will improve your odds of getting coverage if you call the station's news director, explain your organization and event and offer a phone interview.

CALL EARLY — Call the stations early in the morning. Avoid calling them on the hour or half-hour since they are often doing live news shows then.

BE PREPARED TO INTERVIEW — The reporter may want you to elaborate on the story before committing to it or may want to put you on tape immediately. Be prepared for either. Have three key points ready before you make the call.

STAY FOCUSED — When a newsperson is ready to tape the interview, you will either be asked to give your statement and answer follow-up questions, or he may begin by asking questions first. If the questions do not focus on the points you want to make, steer your answers toward what you want to say. Be sure to answer the question in doing so.

DON'T FAKE IT — If you don't know the answer to a question, just say you don't know. Offer to call back if appropriate.

SOUND INTERESTING — Your voice should never sound monotonous. Stress the interesting and important facts and figures. The station will usually edit the interview so keep your answers brief and to the point, and state the most relevant and important facts first. Be assertive with your points, but not aggressive.

REITERATE YOUR MESSAGE — Since a taped interview may be edited, reiterate and repeat your basic message as often as possible. This will increase the chances that it gets into the final version and is not edited out.

PITCH SMALL STATIONS FIRST — Offer your interview to smaller stations first. This will warm you up for the larger stations and help you predict the types of questions you may be asked.

CORRECT MISTAKES — If at any point the interviewer says something that is inaccurate, feel free to politely interrupt and correct the mistake.

TV Interviews

Whether you are on a live talk show or being taped for the local evening news, the following tips will help you make the most of a TV interview.

Helpful Hints

PICK THE RIGHT SPOKESPERSON — Your spokesperson must first and foremost be somebody who knows the angles of your campaign and issue well, and has had some experience talking about and debating the topic. His belief and commitment to the issue should be immediately apparent.

MASTER THE SOUNDBITE — A soundbite is a quote or succinct one-liner that summarizes an opinion in a colorful but simple manner. Since there is a lot of competition for airtime, it is essential that soundbites be kept to a few seconds. The less editing that must be done, the better. Avoid jargon, use analogies and be personal by explaining how the issue affects this particular audience. Be brief and direct.

KNOW YOUR SHOW — Before you have your interview you should watch several episodes of the talk show or news broadcast to familiarize yourself with the program and with the type of questions your interviewer might ask. Also talk to the booker or producer ahead of time about the overall format of the show, including whether your interview is taped or live and if there will be a studio audience. If you are on a talk show, find out if there are other guests and the order of appearance.

KNOW YOUR MESSAGE — Before the interview, know the main points you want to make. Anticipate questions but do not over-rehearse — you want to sound natural. Steer the interview toward the points you want to make before time runs out. You can take notes with you to the set, but don't read from them on the air.

REITERATE YOUR POINTS — Make an effort to repeat your major point over and over, especially in taped interviews. Remember that portions of the interview may be edited, and you don't want to risk having your main point edited out. Take advantage of pauses in the interview to make your point. You have a right to complete your answers, so if you are interrupted, politely and firmly insist on finishing your answer. Request clarification if you are asked a question you do not understand, and do not fudge facts and figures. Bring visuals along if they will help make your point more memorable.

PREPARE FOR HOSTILE QUESTIONS — If the Sierra Club is accused of something, you have three choices. You can deny the accusation if it is a false one, admit to it if you have a good explanation, or admit to it and detail the lesson you learned from the mistake. If the accuser's facts are wrong, deny the basis of the attack.

PAY ATTENTION TO BODY LANGUAGE — Avoid exaggerated hand movements, tapping your foot, saying "you know" and "uh" a lot and clearing your throat. If you are sitting, sit upright, lean slightly forward and never cross your legs. Look at the interviewer, not the camera. Use moderate hand gestures, smile and nod. Remember that everything you do will be magnified.

ASSUME YOU ARE ALWAYS ON CAMERA — Even if you think the camera is focusing on someone else, act like you are on camera at all times. Do not say anything, even jokingly, that could be taken out of context or picked up and used out of context. When you are in the studio, assume the cameras are always rolling.

DRESS CAREFULLY — Women should dress in solid-colored, simple suits or dresses. Avoid light colors, busy patterns, sparkling or noisy jewelry and heavy make-up. Men should stick with light-blue shirts and dark suits. Ties should not have wild colors. Both men and women should avoid clothes that are uncomfortable or that rustle and make noise against a microphone. Contact lenses are preferred over glasses.

News Conferences

The first thing to keep in mind when planning a news conference is that reporters will not cover news conferences unless they deliver real news. You must be announcing something newsworthy such as a controversial report, a lawsuit, a boycott or a significant new development in your campaign. These are especially interesting to reporters if you spice them up with good sound and visual images. Also keep in mind that the amount of time and effort it takes to organize a conference may be better spent doing one-on-one calls and interviews.

Helpful Hints

□ Before the Event

CHOOSE A GOOD LOCATION — You can hold a news conference in your organization's office if you have an appropriate room or directly outside of a location relevant to your news story. The location should be safe, easy to reach, conveniently located for the media, and have good access to parking. Be aware of the weather forecast if you decide to hold your conference outside. Have a rain location planned and inform the attending reporters well in advance if the location is changed. If you hold the conference inside, your room should neither be so big that it seems like nobody has attended, nor so small that the reporters are packed together.

CHOOSE A GOOD DAY — The best days to hold a news conference are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Mondays are not ideal because it is difficult to do reminder calls over the weekend. Fridays are not ideal because fewer people watch the news on a Friday night or read the Saturday paper. If you choose to hold it on a Monday, remind reporters on Friday and again Monday morning. Weekends can be difficult because there are significantly fewer reporters working. If it must be on weekend, alert the weekend assignment editors well in advance.

CHOOSE A GOOD TIME — You should not plan a conference before 9:30 a.m. because not all reporters will be able to make it that early. Nor should you hold it later then 2 p.m. because many reporters will not be able to meet their deadlines for filing stories.

ALERT REPORTERS AHEAD OF TIME — Send out a written advisory (preferably by fax) a few days to a week ahead of time, but be careful not to scoop yourself. The advisory should include the five "W"s (who, what, where, when, why) of your event, but should *not* reveal the news. That's what the news conference is for. See the example of a news advisory on page 99.

USE "DAYBOOKS" — A daybook is a computerized calendar of media events maintained usually by the local newswire (Associated Press, Reuters, or regional wire service) and sent electronically into newsrooms. They are regularly consulted by the assignment editors. You should fax a copy of your news advisory to the local newswire service and call to confirm that your event will be included in the daybook.

PREPARE A PRESS KIT — A press kit should be provided to every reporter when they sign in. These should include a news release summarizing the story (see page 98 for an example), a list of speakers including full name and title (and biographical information, if possible), fact sheets and backgrounders that support your position and any other relevant material. You should also be sure to deliver or send a press kit after the news conference to reporters who did not attend.

PREPARE THE SPEAKERS — Anticipate tough questions ahead of time. You may want to make a list of questions and practice delivering short, quotable answers. Hold a practice news conference to polish your statements and ensure that the speakers are not too repetitive (or, even worse, contradict each other).

SET UP THE LOCATION — If possible, you should offer reporters juice, coffee, tea and ice water. You should provide a podium that has a Sierra Club sign on the front so it is in all camera shots. There should be space toward the back of the room for TV cameras and a table near the front for radio reporters. Definitely have one or two greeters with a sign in sheet so you know who attended and who did not.

MAKE PITCH CALLS — Call key reporters the day before your news conference and ask if they received your news advisory. If not, offer to send it again. Explain what the topic of the news conference will be but, again, do not give too much information. Convince the reporter that this topic will be of interest and is important to her audience.

□ During the Event

USE VISUALS — Any good visuals, including pictures, charts, graphs, maps, videotapes or slides will increase your chances of getting coverage. Your news advisory should note that there are "excellent photo opportunities." You should also include a description of what the photo opportunity will be.

DON'T BE LATE — Start the conference within five minutes of the designated starting time. Begin by introducing yourself and the speakers, and then move right into people's comments.

LIMIT NUMBER OF SPEAKERS — When planning the conference, organize your key points and have no more than four speakers. Additional people can stand behind the podium to answer questions later in the news conference if necessary. Each speaker should limit his remarks to five minutes or less.

ANSWER QUESTIONS — After all the speakers have made their statements, the news conference should be opened for questions. Each question should be answered at the podium so that quotes are picked up by the microphones. Requests for one-on-one questions after the interview are fairly standard, particularly by TV and radio stations who may want to polish up a sound bite from the news conference.

□ After the Event

FOLLOW UP — After the news conference, deliver press kits to any key reporters who did not attend. Make calls to key reporters or outlets that did not attend to offer a one-on-one interview. You should return to your office as quickly as possible after the news conference so reporters can contact you with additional questions.

News Release

A news release is the standard document for carrying a basic message about your campaign or your issue to the outside world. The biggest mistake people make regarding news releases is that they write too many. News releases should be saved for a newsworthy — meaning new and different — event or story. Some examples of when to issue a news release include: to announce your organization's stance on or response to an issue, to release an evaluation of the work of public officials, to inform the public of the appointment or election of a new leader, or to call for the passage or defeat of legislation.

Helpful Hints

☐ Writing a News Release

(See the sample news release on page 98 as a guide.)

GIVE YOURSELF TIME — Releases take time to write well.

USE THE PROPER FORMAT — Use the attached sample news release as a guide for proper formatting. The important components of the formatting include:

Use organizational letterhead, and type "News Release" in a large-sized typeface on top of the first page.

In the top left, type "For Immediate Release" if appropriate or put a specific day the story should be released.

In the top right corner put the name and phone number of the contact person(s).

Type "more" at the bottom of each page except for the final page where you should type "###" — which indicates that the news release is finished.

Use a catchy headline to attract attention to your release.

If you are mailing the release, write "News Release" on the front of the envelope.

WRITE IN PYRAMID STYLE — Your news release should read like a news story. Say the most important things first, and use a catchy lead sentence to engage your reader. A limited amount of background information and supporting quotes should be put in the following paragraphs. In general, paragraphs should be limited to one or two sentences. Do not use too many quotes, and make sure the ones you do use do not come across as stilted. The first time you use an acronym, make sure it appears in parentheses after the full name of whatever it represents.

KEEP IT SHORT — Limit the release to one or two pages. Keep it simple, clear and direct. Do feel free to include visual aids to increase interest when possible.

□ Distributing a News Release

USE A FAX OR E-MAIL — Whenever possible, use a fax to distribute news releases. You can also send them via e-mail, and more reporters are beginning to prefer this option. Regular mail should be your last option.

FOLLOW UP — Follow up the release with a phone call to the news outlets to make sure they received the release and to urge them to cover the story. In calling, avoid leaving messages and try to reach a live person instead. If you must leave a message keep it as brief as possible but give the top reason for why the release is newsworthy. If an outlet did not receive it, offer to send it again. Both your release and your phone call should convey a sense of urgency.

Sample News Release

SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

408 C St., NE Washington, DC 20002
202-547-1141 (fax) 202-547-6009
www.sierraclub.org

Write all releases on organization letterhead with the address and phone number.

News Release

Write "News Release" in large letters to draw attention.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 8,1998 **CONTACT:** Holly Minch, 202-675-7903

Indicate who to contact for information.

Indicate the date the information can be released.

Sierra Club Calls For Moratorium on Health-Threatening Livestock Factories

Use larger font for the headline than for the text. Make sure the headline includes the essential information about the release.

WASHINGTON, DC — Sierra Club today called for a national moratorium on any new corporate-controlled livestock factories. These giant operations — where tens of thousands of animals are 'produced' in factory settings — are polluting America's water and air, and the Sierra Club calls for a halt on the construction of any more of these operations until national standards are in place to prevent further damage to public health.

"America's drinking water is at risk," said Kathryn Hohmann, Director of the Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program. "We've seen the product of corporate livestock factories — the waste from thousands of hogs, chickens and cattle poison water supplies and sicken communities. It's time for a national solution to a health threat that is affecting communities across America."

In the body of the release, use short paragraphs of one to two sentences. Put the most important information first.

All across America, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are threatening public health, the environment, and the economic vitality of our communities. Animal waste from these livestock factories can spill and contaminate groundwater and surface water. The manure from storage lagoons has caused illness in some communities and sent property values plummeting in others.

"Furthermore, these corporate operations are putting the family farmer out of business," Hohmann emphasized. "The huge corporations that run these factories are edging out family farmers, who often use more environmentally friendly farming methods." Every corporate factory operation replaces ten family farmers, and the average annual salary of contract growers working for these corporations is only about $16,000.

"My family has been farming the same land in Northeast Oklahoma for over 50 years, but when our land and livelihood were threatened by a wastewater spill from a giant poultry operation, I knew it was time to take action and fight back," said Bill Berry, a family farmer and President and founding member of Concerned Citizens for Green County Conservation.

Hohmann stressed, "This problem can be solved and a national moratorium is a common sense, cautious action that will give us time to develop national standards that will protect our health and drinking water. Absolutely no more of these operations should be built until safeguards are in place."

Environmentalists, public health advocates and family farmers are meeting in Washington, DC this week as part of "Big River Week" to develop long-term strategies to fight pollution from livestock factories, clean up our water and to protect our communities, for our families and for our future.

###

Type "###" (centered) to indicate the end of the release.Type "more" if it continues on another page.

Sample News Advisory

A news advisory is written in simple form without many details. It can alert journalists to an event that might interest them or inform them of the basic information about a news conference without giving away its substance. A news advisory is written just like a news release with the dates, phone numbers, and contact people

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Write all releases on organization letterhead with the address and phone number.

News Advisory

Write "News Advisory" in large letters to draw attention.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 7,1998 **CONTACT:** Sam Parry, 202-675-7907

Indicate who to contact for information.

Indicate the date when the information can be released.

Sierra Club Ranks America's Most Sprawling Cities

Use larger font for the headline than for the text. Make sure the headline includes the essential information about the advisory.

Environmental, Economic Consequences of Suburban Sprawl Evident from Coast to Coast

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Wednesday, September 9, at 9:00 a.m., the Sierra Club is unveiling its new report detailing one of America's fastest-growing environmental problems — suburban sprawl. The report, entitled "The Dark Side of the American Dream: The Costs and Consequences of Suburban Sprawl," ranks the top 30 sprawling American cities.

This national press conference kicks off a series of local Sierra Club media events held around the country in more than 40 sites, all highlighting this report and pressing local leaders to plan growth better to avoid sprawl.

Who:	Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club
What:	Sierra Club to release its new national report on the blight of suburban sprawl — "The Dark Side of the American Dream: The Costs and Consequences of Suburban Sprawl."
When:	Wednesday, September 9, 1998, at 9:00 a.m.
Where:	The West Room at the National Press Club, at 14th and F Streets, NW

Include only the who, what, where, when and why. All news should be saved for the news conference, but include enough information to interest reporters.

This event will include excellent photo opportunities.

Breakfast to be served.

# # #

Type "###" (centered) to indicate the end of the release.Type "more" if it continues on another page.

Letters-to-the-Editor

Because people read letters-to-the-editor (LTEs) more than any other section of the newspaper, they are a quick, effective and continuing means of communicating your campaign message to a wide audience. They can be used to correct and clarify facts in a news story, editorial or op-ed piece, oppose or support actions of an official agency, direct attention to a problem, spur news editors to cover an issue that is being overlooked, and urge readers to support your cause.

Helpful Hints

PICK A TIMELY TOPIC — Newspapers rarely publish letters about topics that are not being covered in the news. Doing so will increase your letter's chances of being published.

RESEARCH THE GUIDELINES — Most papers' length limit on LTEs is around 250 words. Stick to this so that an editor does not cut out the important points of your letter. Some papers require a typed letter. Others may want it sent via e-mail. Often newspapers want your address and phone number so they can verify that you wrote the letter. You can usually find a paper's guidelines on the letters page. If not, call the paper directly or visit its Web site.

ASSUME NOTHING — Do not assume that your readers are informed on your topic. Give a concise but informative background before plunging into the main issue. Refer to any newspaper article or editorial by date and title. Also include any relevant credentials that prove you are informed about your topic.

BE BRIEF — State your position as succinctly as possible without eliminating necessary detail. Keep your paragraphs short. Long rambling sentences and digressions will cause people to lose interest quickly. Stick to one subject.

MAINTAIN COMPOSURE — It is okay to express outrage, but it should be kept under control. Avoid personal attacks and focus instead on criticizing specific policies or ideas.

FIND A LOCAL ANGLE — Readers are more interested in an issue when they see how it affects their lives and communities. Find a way to show how budget cuts or environmental policies will affect this particular readership.

INVOLVE YOUR VOLUNTEERS — You can generate a lot of letters by distributing outlines of sample letters to your campaign volunteers. Stagger mailings a few days apart for a current topic or weeks apart to spur general interest. Be sure letter writers have their facts straight. Letters by Sierra Club members that argue for competing interests or include inconsistent facts do not reflect well on the organization.

AVOID FORM LETTERS — Do not send the same letter to two competing papers in the same circulation area. A form letter sent to papers in different markets should look like an original and all letters should be signed individually.

Op Eds

Op-eds are printed "OPposite the EDitorial page" and are written by community leaders and syndicated columnists, rather than the newspapers' staff writers. These articles can be very influential in shaping public debate. They can also serve as stepping stones to interview requests and provide increased visibility for the organization. Keep in mind that once an op-ed is published, papers often wait a while before using material from that organization again.

Helpful Hints

PICK A TIMELY AND LOCAL TOPIC — Op-eds should relate to a current event and have a definite point of view. They should not be reactions to a published article (write a letter to the editor for that purpose). Use a specific person, group or event to show how your community is affected by your issue. Editors receive more op-eds than they can print, so taking a local angle will help yours stand out.

DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE — Decide which audience you want to reach with your op-ed. This will help you decide whether you should submit your piece to a local, state, or national paper, or to a professional journal. Keep in mind that your op-ed is more likely to be accepted if it takes a position different from that of the newspaper.

PROPOSE TOPIC BEFORE DRAFTING — To save yourself time, talk to the editor of the op-ed page about your idea before you begin writing. It is best to call early in the day when the staff is not on deadline. If the editor wants to see your op-ed, include any relevant credentials and a cover letter reminding him of your conversation. If you are sending your op-ed to more than one paper, be sure to mention that in your cover letter.

RESEARCH THE GUIDELINES — Most papers have a length limit on op-eds. It is usually around 700 words, but be sure to find out before you begin writing. Papers usually request that you put your name, phone number, and address in the top left corner and the number of words in the upper right corner. Be sure to give your piece a short headline. Many papers now accept op-eds by e-mail, which saves them the time of re-typing it.

FOCUS ON ONE IDEA — Before writing, make an outline to help you keep your piece concise. Concentrate on one theme or issue and organize your thoughts in a clear and logical order. Present the issue in the first paragraph and offer suggestions, responses or solutions in the second or third paragraphs. Write in the active voice and limit your paragraphs to two or three sentences. Avoid technical terms and insider jargon, and back up assertions with facts.

GET A SIGNATORY — Most papers prefer printing op-eds written by a local authority or community leader. So even if you wrote the op-ed, have a local expert or group president read it over and sign it. This will make it more likely to be chosen.

FOLLOW UP — If you do not hear anything from the paper within a few days of submitting your op-ed, call to make sure it was received and to remind the editor of why your op-ed is timely and of local concern. If the op-ed was rejected, find out why so you can write a better one next time.

Editorials

Editorials reflect the opinions of the owners and editors of a newspaper. They are very influential because policy-makers often view them as representative of the majority view in that newspaper's region. A well-written editorial can convince decision-makers to make the right decision for your campaign. But good editorials don't just happen. You must call the editorial page editors and make a strong appeal for support on behalf of your cause. Most editorial writers want to fully understand all sides of an issue before they take a position. If they think your cause is a good one, they will support it.

Helpful Hints

ARRANGE A MEETING — Call the editorial page editor several days to a week before you want to visit. Identify yourself and your organization, explain why you want to meet and ask to schedule a meeting. Explain why your topic is timely, local and of concern to the newspaper's readers. When you get a meeting scheduled, ask who will be in attendance.

BE PREPARED FOR THE MEETING — Keep the meeting small (two or three people from your campaign) and informal. Take a short, written statement that explains the most important points of the issue, and bring enough copies for everyone at the meeting. Existing campaign fact sheets can serve this purpose well. This will help guide you through your presentation, and it will also help the editors later if they decide to write the editorial. In addition, bring any previous editorials on the issue and phone numbers of people who can be reached for more information. Include any good visuals such as maps or pictures and be sure to explain why an editorial would be timely and influential. Anticipate criticisms that the editors may throw at you and figure out ahead of time how you will respond.

KNOW YOUR PAPER'S HEADLINES — If you are asking the paper to take a stand you should know what they have reported about the topic in the past. Be sure to read the paper on the day of your meeting in case there are any articles on your subject.

ENCOURAGE REPORTERS — Editorial meetings can be with an entire editorial board or with just a single editor. Occasionally a reporter or editorial cartoonist will sit in. It can be to your advantage to have a reporter in the meeting because you may interest her in the story.

THANK THE WRITER — If an editorial appears, write a letter or make a call to thank the editor. If later there is a positive outcome from the editorial, update the writer and thank her again.

FOLLOW UP — If the newspaper does not run an editorial on your behalf or runs an editorial that opposes your cause, ask the editors to print an op-ed from your organization. (Do not make this suggestion unless they have definitively said they will not run one.) See the "How-to" on op-eds for more information on writing an effective op-ed article.

Our job is to bring people together to protect the places and people they love. Sound simple? Not necessarily — unless you have this manual.

Inside, Sierra Club leaders share more than a century of grassroots organizing experience and wisdom. I hope this book will be as useful to you as *The Joy of Cooking* and Dr. Spock were to me as a neophyte cook and new father.

Armed with these practical tools and techniques, we can confidently step out into our communities to protect our environment — for our families, for our future.

And, like cooks and parents, activists are always learning; let us know how we can make this manual better, more useful, more powerful.

— **Carl Pope**
SIERRA CLUB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CYNTHIA JOHNSON