

Reaching a Broader Audience

(with Your Water Quality Data Messages)



Challenges ➤➤ Potential Solutions

“Parachute-in Projects” – Outside companies complete a community project but neglect local buy-in and long-term maintenance.



Good projects begin with the end in mind. It is necessary to get local buy-in at the start of the project and to think about a long-term maintenance plan.

Lack of consensus – Many problems are solved by engineers and program managers without input from stakeholders or community groups.



It is important to get a variety of stakeholders involved early in the design process. This will help open communication lines between the decision makers and the public.

Measuring Success – After a project is constructed, the effectiveness of the project is rarely quantified and communicated to the public.



Committing to quantify the effects of a project can help build trust with a community, by showing them the exact benefits of their tax dollars.

Communication – It can be difficult for outside groups to overcome inherent distrust and effectively communicate their messages to rural communities.



Use “Homophily” to your advantage (i.e., align your attitude and appearance with your audience as much as possible to gain trust).



Quick Tips

- Encourage everyone to play in the creek
- Re-think target audiences (e.g., art lovers, economic development orgs., senior citizen centers, fraternities and sororities, etc.)
- Make your audience feel like they are part of a larger community
- Provide information for water quality concerns in the community
- Personally connect with community members
- Give people jobs / responsibilities to get them to show up to events
- Promote the past success of your project / event
- Use personal stories in conveying your message
- *Fostering Sustainable Behavior* by McKenzie-Mohr is a great book and a helpful resource.