

Getting a “Win” for Your Lake

Wisconsin Lakes Convention
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RIVER ALLIANCE
of WISCONSIN

Agenda

- Good advocacy: best practices
- How other groups have been successful
- Your turn: How to get started



River Alliance of Wisconsin

- We advocate respectfully but assertively for rivers.
- We bring people to rivers so they experience their beauty and understand their threats.
- We partner with, when appropriate, and challenge, when necessary, the government agencies entrusted with protecting rivers.
- We develop the ability of ordinary citizens and grassroots groups to organize their passion for rivers.



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You Can Advocate

- It is legal for nonprofit organizations to advocate about issues and legislation
- You may not endorse candidates, or do anything related to political campaigns



You Need to Advocate

- Citizen voices matter
- All levels of government matter
- Your advocacy style matters
 - The “Ps”: pesky persistence, pissed off passion, and polite
- Relationships matter
 - no permanent friends or enemies



Advocacy Steps

- Build relationships and trust
- Invite them to participate
- Ask for their opinions/expertise
- Have something specific to ask



Advocacy Steps

- Build relationships and trust
 - Reach out when you don't have something to ask for.
 - Reach out to say something positive about their contribution to your cause; and make it personal
 - Include them in your organization's communication (meeting minutes, mailing list, newsletter, etc.)
 - Remember: no permanent friends or enemies; you don't have to agree all the time, but you need to be respectful



Advocacy Steps

- Invite them to participate
 - Events,
 - annual meeting,
 - clean up days,
 - boating trips,
 - educational meetings



Advocacy Steps

- Ask for their opinions/expertise
 - Technical advisors (DNR, County, etc.)
 - Committees



Advocacy Steps

- Have something specific to ask
 - After steps 1-3 are done (as appropriate)
 - Elected official- support a piece of legislation; budget item
 - Agency staff- support a policy, implement an action
 - Business owner- publicly support a bill or policy, talk with other business owners about an issue



Advocacy Steps

- What concerns or issues do you see for your lake, and what do you want to do about it?
- Who do you need to engage to make that change?
- How can you build, or continue to strengthen a relationship with those you need to engage for your issue?



Advocacy Steps

- Be prepared to tell your story
 - Why you/your organization care about your issue
 - Explain why this matters to you, your family, your business, your community, etc.
 - Keep it simple, personal- this is NOT about the facts and data



Case Study: Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards



What concerns or issues do you see for your lake, and what do you want to do about it?



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Case Study: Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards

Who do you need to engage to make that change?



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How can you build, or continue to strengthen a relationship with those you need to engage for your issue?



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Case Study: Big Eau Pleine Citizens Organization



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Your Turn: How to Get Started

- What concerns or issues do you see for your lake, and what do you want to do about it?
- Who do you need to engage to make that change?
- How can you build, or continue to strengthen a relationship with those you need to engage for your issue?
- What is your story?



Questions



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