



# River Voices

## Take Action!

# Creating a Rewarding Campaign

By Liz Paul, Idaho Rivers United, [www.idahorivers.org](http://www.idahorivers.org)

To address the many threats to freshwater resources faced by communities throughout the country, river conservation organizations need to take action. A campaign that inspires persistence is essential, and rewarding campaigns are the key to persistence. There is plenty of expert advice on campaign planning and implementation, but rewarding campaigning ultimately bears a remarkable resemblance to gardening or parenting where you learn by doing. Rewarding campaigns require a willingness to experiment, roll with the punches and patiently wait for results.

Don't wait until all the books are read, the perfect campaign is designed, or experienced staff is hired—get to work now. That's when the real learning begins. Heed the words of one of the twentieth century's greatest campaigners, Mahatma Gandhi, who said:

*"You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result."*

Campaigns come in all types and sizes. They are as unique as the communities in which they are waged and the people who lead them. For all their differences, however, campaigns can be defined as a connected series of actions taken over a period of time and focused on a target to achieve a specific goal. A rewarding campaign is one that enables those involved to build personal knowledge, develop positive relationships and maintain the hope needed to persist over time. When it comes to protecting our communities' irreplaceable freshwater resources, inaction is not an option.



*Campaigning is for everyone.*

## Goal Setting for a Rewarding Campaign

How people interact with each other influences how rewarding a campaign will be. Selecting a goal is an important opportunity to shape the campaign's approach to interpersonal relations. Expect some disagreement over the goal along the lines of "not inspiring enough," "impossible" or "some of our members won't like this." An egalitarian, consensus process should be used to determine goals. Take time to allow everyone to express their opinions and engage in a respectful dialogue. Don't settle for anything less than enthusiastic buy-in. A team of empowered, respected and responsible people is much more powerful than foot soldiers following orders. Additionally, improving everyone's listening and cooperation skills is good practice for what is to come.

Don't settle for a vague goal that's as general as protecting the Boise River. Identify a specific goal, such as passing a

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# River Network

Connecting People, Saving Rivers

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### River Network

*National Office*  
520 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1130  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
503-241-3506; Fax: 503-241-9256  
info@rivernetwork.org

### *Field Offices*

Boise, Idaho; St. Michaels, Maryland; Asheville, North Carolina; Pendleton, Oregon; Salt Lake City, Utah; Shelburne, Vermont; Madison, Wisconsin

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As the old blessing/curse says, “may you live in interesting times.” And indeed, interesting times are upon us. Last year we watched as people in the hundreds of thousands took to the streets in Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan and elsewhere to stand up for their beliefs. More recently, the “Occupy” movement has taken our cities by storm with people of all backgrounds and political persuasions engaging in important conversations about who we are and want to be as a society. And before “Occupy,” we had the emergence of the Tea Party. New grassroots movements are forming and growing in strength at a rate not seen since the 1960s.

If you can manage to look past the din of the current electoral campaign season and the related headlines, you’ll see that environmental issues—and water issues in particular—are fueling much of this activism. Whether it is New York State’s developing policy on hydrofracking, President Obama’s upcoming decision on the Keystone XL pipeline project or a zoning decision before your local County Board, watershed organizations are hard at work on high-stakes advocacy campaigns to protect and restore our waterways.

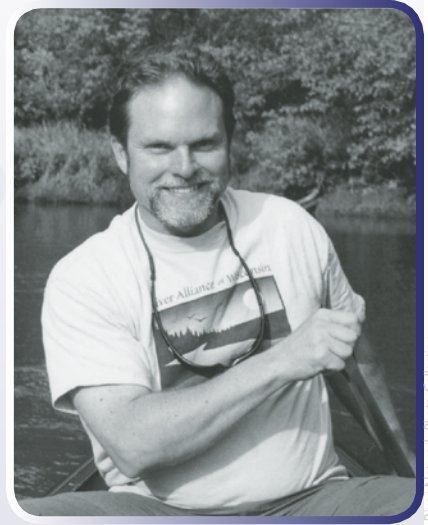
The word “advocacy” conjures many different mental images for watershed organizations—for some it’s submitting comments on a proposed pollution permit, for others it’s dressing up in a frog costume and joining a rally in defense of wetland protections, and for others it’s engaging a 4-H group in a river cleanup to highlight the value of a local stream. But if we are to be effective as a watershed conservation movement, we must not allow our different comfort levels with various advocacy strategies to get in the way of recognizing that we are all advocates—advocates for clean water, advocates for healthy communities, advocates for the natural resources that sustain our local economies.

In this issue, you can learn more about the experiences and wisdom gained by many in our community who have engaged in advocacy campaigns. As you contemplate your next advocacy campaign, don’t forget that River Network staff is available to help!

Yours in river conservation,



Todd Ambs, President  
River Network



River Network Photo Collection

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riverfront setback ordinance or re-establishing native fish passage. It's more rewarding, and it's easier to recruit volunteers, raise money, stay on task and evaluate results if a goal is specific and measurable.

If a goal is extremely ambitious, like removing Condit Dam or outlawing fracking, a number of campaigns will need to be undertaken to reach the goal. Decide on a campaign goal that can be reached in one to five years. In support of a long-range goal to protect freshwater from pollution caused by natural gas fracking, American Rivers,

*“Fact sheets and experts are important, but real progress will be made when campaigners stop relying on facts and start building relationships.”*

## A Good Cause is Not Enough

Do not expect the facts or righteousness of your cause to win the day. Base your position on solid supporting reasons that are either fact-based, such as “beaches close and people can't go swimming when untreated sewage is discharged in the river,” or opinion-based, such as “our community will be better if children can swim at the beach.” Both are important but limited in terms of the influence they will have on target audiences.

There is always someone involved in a campaign who believes the job of the campaign is to deliver information. They're sure that if members of the community read a fact sheet about what climate change will do to their local watershed, those people will support a city council resolution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It would be easy if that was the case, but it's not. All people have a well-established system of personal beliefs and values, and their positions on water pollution, dam relicensing, fracking and so-on stem from those beliefs. Everyone, even river conservationists, will overlook facts that don't support their beliefs, and they'll embrace facts that do. Fact sheets and experts are important, but real progress will be made when campaigners stop relying on facts and start building relationships.

## Finding Common Ground

We're culturally trained to divide people into “us” and “them.” A campaign can pit us-who-are-right against them-who-are-wrong. But no one has a monopoly on being right. It's essential that we put ourselves in the shoes of other people and see the situation from their perspectives. Problems will be solved when everyone's *ideas* of what is right are pulled together.



© Idaho Rivers United

Campaigners ready for 100 6<sup>th</sup> graders

the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and others recently ran a successful short-term campaign to convince the Delaware River Basin Commission to conduct a study of the potential impacts of natural gas development. More than twenty years ago, Friends of the White Salmon and many other organizations campaigned against the relicensing of Condit Dam, a campaign that eventually led to its removal on October 26, 2011. Establishing interim campaign goals is a way to break up long campaigns into more rewarding pieces. Milestones are reached sooner, successes can be celebrated and the likelihood of campaign burnout is reduced.

That might sound daunting, but we've all solved problems this way before. When a group decides on what kind of pizza to order, Mondo Meat is right for one person, while Very Veggie is right for someone else. By a young age, we understand that people have different tastes. There is no right or wrong pizza, and we work out solutions in which everyone can enjoy their meal. Similar understanding needs to be a central tenet of rewarding campaigns.

It isn't easy to apply the "it's OK to have a different opinion" approach broadly because people working on campaigns are passionate. Campaigners want to persuade people to agree with them, and sometimes they don't like people because of their views. This is manifested in actions like interrupting others when they speak or through making disparaging remarks. Respecting and accepting different opinions, even befriending opponents, does not validate their positions or weaken yours. Keep this in mind: model it and teach it. This difficult approach pays off because it's very rewarding to have friendly relationships, and they often lead to solutions.

This approach should also be used with an often annoying group of people—those who are uninterested in the important work you're doing. When you meet someone who isn't interested in your campaign, stop talking and start listening. By finding out what they are interested in instead of delivering a lecture on the cause, the encounter will be more rewarding for both of you.

## Relationships Are Key

Part of a campaign's initial research includes figuring out who has authority to make desired changes and how they get that authority. This information will help determine campaign strategies and actions including which relationships need nurturing. For example, if a campaign goal is to improve habitat for salmon and steelhead by increasing in-stream flows, local

irrigation districts have authority to determine how much water is taken from streams to irrigate the crops. Irrigation districts are governed by boards elected from their membership. A board's authority comes from land owners with water rights. Some campaign actions, therefore, should build relationships with the land owners.

Campaigners must also build relationships with other stakeholders to learn about concerns. Idaho Rivers United (IRU) is part of a coalition, Idaho Families for Clean Water, fighting an open pit mine in the Boise River headwaters. Many of the rural people who live near the potential mine are descendants of miners who settled the area. To reach out to them, Idaho Families for Clean Water hosted a fried chicken lunch at the local social hall and posted an open invitation to the community. Campaign staff and volunteers sat around the table and chatted with guests. The campaigners developed valuable relationships over that fried chicken, and those relationships dwarf the worth of the fact sheets, maps and expert information shared by Idaho Families for Clean Water that day.

This approach may not ensure a campaign's success, but the benefits of discarding stereotypes and building relationships with people who hold different opinions are tremendous. Strategies that include relationship-building are not only essential, but also rewarding, often providing people with positive experiences that keep them involved.

### Liz Learns from a Mistake

I learned a great lesson in 2011 when I invited a group of people interested in the Boise River to work with Idaho Rivers United (IRU) to organize a river restoration workshop. IRU's goal was to bring more public attention to the need for restoration, but we have never led on-the-ground restoration work. Unintentionally, I stepped right in the middle of other people's turf. What was IRU doing spearheading a Boise River restoration workshop? Groups and individuals who were doing restoration work and had invested tremendous personal and organizational resources in restoration were rightfully put off, and it took longer than necessary to develop trust and form the strong partnership needed to organize what turned out to be a very successful workshop. Next time, I will meet with key people privately first, make sure I understand and respect their concerns.

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## Will It Make a Difference?

Campaigners are often asked the question, “Will this make a difference?” Everyone involved in work to protect rivers and streams sometimes feels as though their efforts won’t do any good. Why meet with an elected official who is staunchly opposed to your position? Why testify at a hearing when you’ll be outnumbered 10-to-one? Why take water samples when the industrial discharger has close connections with the Governor’s office? Campaigners hear comments like this constantly, and it’s tempting to forego seemingly futile strategies or campaigns. Here are three reasons to reconsider:

**1<sup>st</sup>- Doing nothing is not an option.** Your chances of prevailing might be so tiny that everything you think of doing can seem pointless. However, it’s better to do something than nothing at all. It’s rewarding knowing you are doing what you can, and your campaign will be ready if unpredictable events like natural disaster or political scandal create a more hospitable climate for the changes you want.

**2<sup>nd</sup>- An action’s impact can’t be predicted.** The Girl Scout who participates in a water quality monitoring project that’s ignored by the City Council may be inspired to become a pollution-fighting aquatic biologist. Years after a wetland-destroying developer and his teenage son participate in a campaign river float, the son may take charge, stop developing wetlands and finance restoration. Marian Wright Edelman, founder and head of the Children’s Defense Fund, advised the activists at Occupy Portland in November 2011 “to keep planting seeds. You never know what’s going to grow.” The impact may not be apparent for a very long time.

**3<sup>rd</sup>- Action has impact.** Citizen action always has an impact regardless of whether it accomplishes its stated intention. At the very least, the person taking action is changed, and the influence often extends to their



© Idaho Rivers United

Campaigners pitching in on a new trail

friends and family. As an organizer, you don’t know how profound the impact will be, but the next time someone asks whether an action they take will make a difference, look them in the eye and say “yes.”

## The Reward Is the Doing

It’s important to measure campaign success in more than one way to avoid personal burnout and keep people engaged. There is no guaranteed-to-win campaign formula, so it’s possible a campaign won’t achieve desired results in the timeframe anticipated. Dams are relicensed, not dismantled, polluters continue to pollute with impunity, box stores are built in wetlands, and golf courses remain green while rivers run dry. Failing to protect the rivers we love sucks, but it doesn’t mean the campaign didn’t succeed.


Adopt the attitude of Thomas A. Edison who said: “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” Or, in the case of a really difficult campaign, follow Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy:

*Joy lies in the fight, in the attempt, in the suffering involved, not in the victory itself.*

Recognition of what has been accomplished can make the difference between a campaign team losing hope in the power of citizen action and a campaign team that can't wait to try again. Campaigns can be viewed as experiments or quests for knowledge, thereby eliminating the "winning-is-everything" pressure.

Measure success by what you've accomplished and how you've gotten there. Keep track of what you and your team learn throughout a campaign. You learn about the issue, and you learn about the people, the community, the decision-making process and more. Some of the longest-lasting lessons will come from the things that don't go according to plan. What's more, each campaigner will also learn about him or herself.

Celebrate the relationships that develop. Relationships with other campaign team members can be some of the closest relationships of your life. Positive relationships with opponents, decision-makers, media, allies and other stakeholders are investments that will increase your effectiveness in the long run.

And the long run deserves the last word. If there is a silver bullet for reaching campaign goals, it is persistence. Freshwater protection campaigns are often difficult, and there is no such thing as permanent protection. Sometimes campaigning seems to resemble the movie *Groundhog Day*, where you wake up each morning to face a new incarnation of the problem you solved the day before. River activists and river protection organizations must be persistent. A rewarding campaign, one that is understanding and respectful, one that provides campaigners opportunities to learn and to create relationships, and one that measures success by the doing rather than winning, will yield the persistence needed to protect our priceless freshwater resources. 

## Creating Campaigns

Do you want to prevent the extinction of an aquatic species? Stop disgusting waste from confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) from entering your local creek? Protect scenic and recreational values of a river for future generations? Preserve wetland habitat? Remove fish migration barriers? See a dried up riverbed replenished?

A campaign can be created by a motivated individual, a group of concerned citizens, the Board of Directors and staff of an established organization or by a coalition of organizations.

### Who creates a campaign?

#### ▶ Motivated Individuals

After discovering that her son's school was built on a toxic waste dump, Lois Gibbs launched a campaign to clean up Love Canal. 2011 River Network River Hero James McMillan saw the creek that runs through his farm turn brown with mud. He initiated a campaign to reform stormwater regulations in Tennessee.

#### ▶ Concerned Citizens

In 1973, Jerry Meral, Rob Caughlan, David Oke and David Kay created a campaign to protect the Stanislaus River from the New Melones Dam and Reservoir. One of their first campaign accomplishments was to establish California's Friends of the River.

Similarly, a group of boaters hanging in an eddy shared outrage after learning that a hydropower developer was ready to dam the North Fork of the Payette. They took action by launching a campaign and founding Friends of the Payette.

#### ▶ Established Organizations

The board and staff of New York's Riverkeeper created the "Close Indian Point" campaign to shut down the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant on the Hudson River because of the massive damage the plant inflicts on the ecosystem.

In support of their mission to support a healthy and scenic Rappahannock River, the board and staff of Friends of the Rappahannock recently began a campaign in opposition to a proposed quarry on Skinker's Neck, downstream from Fredericksburg.

The Clark Fork Coalition in Missoula, Montana is waging a campaign to achieve public ownership of the municipal water utility.

#### ▶ Coalitions

Friends of the River collaborated with many other groups to undertake the "San Gabriel Mountains Forever Campaign" and protect fragile headwaters.

The Gulf Restoration Network is a permanent coalition of organizations. One of their current campaigns focuses on Hattiesburg Sewage Lagoons that routinely violate clean water laws and pollute Mississippi's rivers.

## Bottling Lightning

# Must-Have Elements to Magnetize Your Organization

By Zach Frankel  
Utah Rivers Council  
[www.utahrivers.org](http://www.utahrivers.org)

There are all manner of campaigns out there: political campaigns, marketing campaigns, education campaigns, misinformation campaigns. The word campaign is so over-used, it is widely taken for granted that anything you work on is therefore a *campaign*. If only it was that easy.



Our movement has been incredibly effective at protecting this incredible place we live, given the ridiculous shoestring budget with which we are asked to do it. But, our movement could find greater effectiveness if we practiced the ancient art of strategy. Lots of campaigns have goals and tactics, but nothing in between.

A good campaign possesses four elements:

1. a goal,
2. supporting objectives,
3. strategies to implement your objectives, and
4. clever tactics.

Incidentally, I am basing this work on advocacy campaigns, although this concept works for all manner of campaigning. In some circles, *advocacy* has become almost a taboo, as if watershed organizations shouldn't be advocating for policy or administrative outcomes. Perhaps your organization receives funding that precludes you from or is just 'uncomfortable' with the idea of advocacy. In my mind, submitting comments on a proposed permit application is a form of advocacy (though not itself a campaign), and it seems that it isn't advocacy itself, as much as the actual tactics that may bother some entities. But

it's your campaign, so make sure it works for your organization's personality.

Good campaigns come in all shapes and sizes, but strategic campaigns infuse money and resources into an organization, increase brand recognition of a campaign and the entity behind it, and achieve something demonstrable in this never-ending quest to save your little corner of our gorgeous planet. Most campaigns I have been involved with took at least a year, and some have taken 5 years.

## GOAL

The **Campaign Goal** is the first essential element of any good campaign. A good campaign goal is specific, quantifiable and capable of being achieved by its leaders. Typically, the goal is something that can be addressed by one of the three branches of government, such as "Pass legislation in my State Legislature," "De-authorize a proposed water diversion" or "Defeat a proposed 404 wetland alteration permit." Statements like "Improving water quality," "Educating my community" and "Saving water" are not campaign goals; however, they are activities or perhaps may be tactics.

In terms of your organization, a good campaign goal will help infuse money into an organization by calling upon the heart and capturing the imagination of your constituents. A campaign goal often utilizes a bit of poetry in this quest, and depending upon how it's framed, may enlist support from your followers right at the get-go.

One of Utah River Council's best campaign goals was to "Defeat proposed Bear River dams from inundating 13 miles of farms, ranches and



Shoshone Nation burial grounds by passing legislation deauthorizing this proposal in the Utah Legislature.” For a lot of different kinds of people, that’s an evocative call to arms. Incidentally, most of this campaign work had nothing to do with actual legislation whatsoever.

## OBJECTIVES

**Campaign Objectives** are the most important elements of any campaign. There usually need to be several objectives to ensure the campaign goal can be implemented. An objective is the task that must be completed before the goal can be obtained and that which occurs just before final victory is achieved. In military terms, objectives are activities such as “surround the opponent on the field of battle” or “gather superior numbers from the air.”

In advocacy work, it may be something like “Garner support from a majority of House Republicans by focusing on Fiscal Impacts,” or “Recruit public support by publicizing the impacts to their drinking water” or “Formalize opposition by collecting 10,000 letters of opposition.”

If you understand your opponent (which itself may be a *research objective*), you should be able to brainstorm at least 5 or 6 objectives. If you can’t, contact a colleague and ask for advice—River Network has tons of sharp minds happy to help in this regard. Challenge yourself to brainstorm 8-10 objectives so you can pick the 2-4 that are best for your campaign. Multiple objectives are a lot like multiple fronts in a battle. The more objectives you have, the more likely you can, in warmongering terms, divide and conquer.

## STRATEGY

**Campaign Strategy** is often absent from advocacy campaigns, in part because we sometimes don’t know our opponent’s

weaknesses and in part because we let them dictate the field of battle to us. Do the opposite by finding their weaknesses and make it at least one of your battle strategies. Each strategy should support an objective to ensure that if the strategy is followed, the objective is attained. Be bold in your strategies by daring to believe you can.

Fighting an administrative effort? Learn about the agency’s funding process and meet them there with a calculator, some research and an accountant. Live in a conservative community? Research and frame your arguments in terms of fiscal economics to ensure your local taxpayers understand you’re trying to save them money. Aligned against a corporate opponent? Research the company’s business structure to identify possible allies among shareholders, or perhaps to cultivate a negative image in the media that may scare away investors.

## TACTICS

**Campaign Tactics** are the easiest to conjure up. You will have many, many tactics implemented and experimented before your campaign ends. These are the nuts and bolts of the campaign, from “Hold a monthly press conference to Pressure the Governor in a meeting.” Some will be surprisingly critical and others may be less so. Conjuring up a good strategy will almost immediately lead you to perhaps a few, perhaps a dozen, individual tactics.

That’s the problem with tactics. They are easy to think up but if they are not based on a strategy, they may not be very effective or lead to anything that helps achieve the campaign goal. That’s why objectives and strategies are so important. Make sure the tactics you select are based on the strategies you have devised.

Good luck, and remember, Victory is attainable if you believe it can be done.

*cont. on page 10*



## The 4 Elements of a Successful Advocacy Campaign

### 1 Goal

#### A Specific, Tangible Victory

Is the goal real? "Saving water" isn't a goal, it's a practice. "Reducing residential water use by 20%" is a goal.

*The failure of most advocacy campaigns is they **only** employ a Goal (which is often vague) and Tactics.*

### 2 Objectives

#### To Meet the Goal

Since little in life is linear, several objectives are often needed to achieve one goal.

Objectives should surround the Goal, like a King in Chess.

*Are there Objectives?*

*These 2 elements will determine whether you will achieve your goal.*

### 3 Strategy

#### Achieves Objectives

A Strategy is the most commonly **absent element** of Advocacy Campaigns.

Assess the battlefield. Who are your opponents? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are the confines of the battlefield itself?

### 4 Tactics

#### Tactic alone will not achieve the goal.

(e.g., hold a press conference, write a letter to the editor, table at an event, meet the Governor, etc.)

Do the Tactics address the Objectives? Or, are they just random acts of activism? How do you measure the success of your Tactics along the way?

*Everyone thinks about Tactics, few think about Strategy.*



# The Slippery Slope of Online Activism

## From High Tech to High Touch

**W**e've all heard the hype about technology, haven't we? The internet is going to make our offices paperless! Hold 5-hour campaign meetings in your pajamas from the comfort of your own home! Facebook and Twitter are responsible for the Arab Spring! Breathless hype notwithstanding, online communications are steadily transforming the political process—how government and corporate leaders take the pulse of the voters while they make up their mind about that upcoming zoning variance, dam removal or regulatory loophole.

Conventional wisdom holds that the most effective advocacy is “high-touch.” We have all spent hours in the quest to get a handful of activists to arrange for campaign donors to meet with their elected officials, send personal invitations to friends to attend events or protests, produce handwritten letters and make phone calls to official offices, or organize a house event hosted by community leaders. These are big asks, and only highly engaged people are going to take these steps for your issue.



Activism is a kind of addiction—a healthy one—so it starts small.

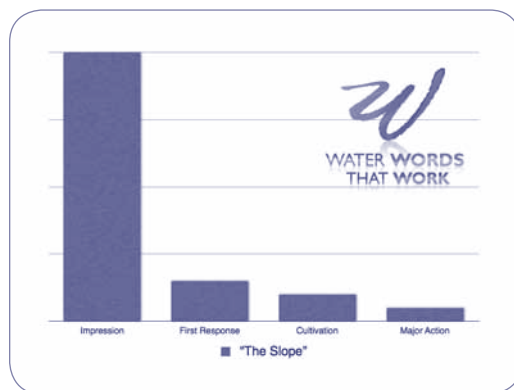
Online communications help you hook new addicts with simple, symbolic actions, like online petitions and small donations.

Cultivate their craving for a larger and more meaningful

role in society by staying in touch and constantly encouraging them about the importance of the actions that they have taken

so far. Some of these individuals will eventually develop an appetite for the actions that really matter and become your new champions.

At Water Words That Work LLC, we envision campaigns in terms of a slope—from larger to smaller numbers, higher tech to higher touch, over time.



Online communication excels at the steps that lead up to those major actions. For example:

- ▶ **Exposure:** Throw up a website and submit it to Google and other search engines. Drive traffic to it with online ads and email blasts. Put the URL in press releases and on billboards, buttons, bumper stickers and protest signs.
- ▶ **First Response:** Invite supporters to sign petitions, make small donations, “like” your Facebook page and forward your emails to their friends. We know these kinds of actions are more symbolic than effective, but they are a signal of interest. That’s what you really want!
- ▶ **Cultivation:** Here is the all important step for improving your advocacy efforts—lavish praise and attention on your first responders!

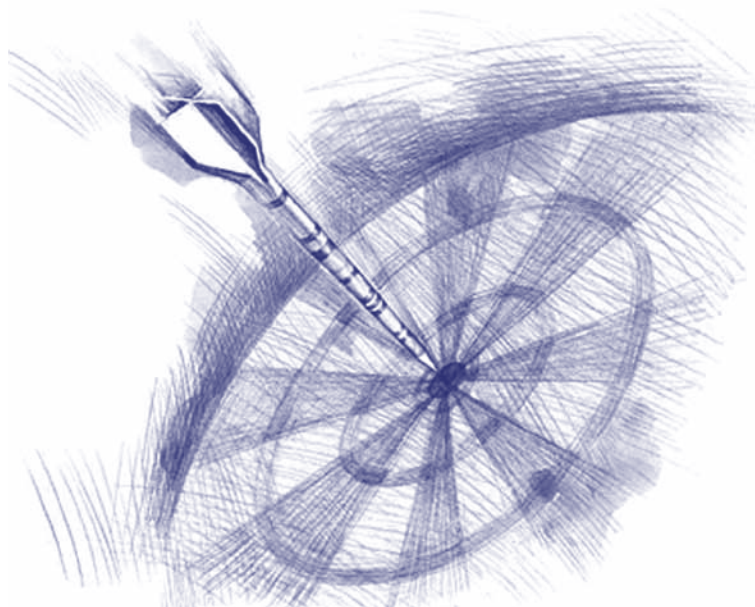
By Chandra Brown  
and  
Eric Eckl  
Water Words That Work, LLC  
[waterwordsthatwork.com](http://waterwordsthatwork.com)

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Make them feel important! Encourage them that their petition signature made a difference, put the most positive spin on your campaign and give them as much credit as you possibly can.

Now you can identify your most active social activists. From this pool of people, you can target the people most likely to become your biggest allies and most effective hardcore activists that will help you push your agenda through high-touch activities like hosting meetings, making in-person visits with elected officials and participating in phone banking events.



So, let's give you some specific tips for using the tools at your fingertips to identify, recruit and engage people quickly and cheaply using online tools.

## **Email Marketing: Organize the Friends You Have Already**

If you haven't yet, get your email list in a system that allows you to track the number of recipients who open messages and click on links that take them to information about your issue (Our free Message Blaster system is a great way to get started if you don't already have this capacity). By viewing frequent click throughs and opens, you can begin to segment your lists into frequent readers and identify people for more personal communications.

Use online event management tools to organize gatherings of every kind. For example, set up your phone banking event as a volunteer event and allow online registrations. Then post links and registration forms on your Facebook and Twitter feeds to recruit new activists.

## **Network: Ask Your Friends to Get Their Friends**

Social media can help your network of activists spread your message with a personal touch. These personal Facebook posts, tweets and blog posts from outside of your organization's branded streams can engage and recruit new activists for your cause. Make sure your email system allows your email recipients to share on their social networks and encourage them to do so.

Look for mentions on your Facebook wall, re-tweets in Twitter and other online mentions from your connections. Thank your social activists for sharing statuses or tweets, and ask your friends to ask their friends to "like" you, to sign up for emails, to donate to a cause or attend a meeting.

By providing easy, fun and rewarding ways to get involved, your friends can bring in new people.

## Online PR & Advertising: Spread the Word Far & Wide

For a fraction of the cost of advertising on radio, television, billboards, etc., you can target new activists, generate press stories and spread the word online through advertising, blogs, press rooms and keyword searches. You can use Facebook Ads to customize your ads for your existing network or expand your reach to other potential target audiences. Employing Google Ads and search engine optimization for your website and frequent blog posts can pick up people searching the internet for keywords associated with your issue. Setting up a press room on your website and a press list in your email system to target reporters working on your issue will help to strengthen relationships with the media.

## Petitions: A New Look for an Old Favorite

Online petitions are a staple of grassroots organizing. Recently, a Change.org petition garnered over 300,000 signatures and lots of national press, which helped to convince Bank of America to drop a proposal to charge \$5/month for debit card fees. Just like paper petitions, online petitions are the most effective when used as a tool to spread your message. Signing

a petition is a first step in activism by getting people to invest in your issue. The petitions can be used to generate media interest, gather names of potential activists and spread the word.

## Electronic Donations: Raise Money Quickly & Cheaply

The internet and social media have been touted as great ways to raise money directly from your supporters. Compared to traditional mail fundraising, online fundraising is fast, cheap and easy. But there's a catch—expect only a small percent of your supporters to donate, and only in small amounts. If you want to raise a lot of money, you need a lot of supporters. So get out there!

A growing trend in corporate giving is to hold online grant competitions where people vote for different projects. If you haven't already competed in one of these competitions, now is a good time to start. After all, what's more fun than giving away *other* people's money?

In 2009, Ogeechee Riverkeeper saw their Facebook network double from 500 fans to

*cont. on page 14*

## Message Blaster Signup



### The Water Words That Work Message

Blaster is an all-in-one solution that makes it easy and affordable for you to get the right words to the right people at the right time. Through a partnership with a major email marketing provider, we offer our clients a single solution that you can use for:

- ▶ Contact Lists
- ▶ Email Newsletters
- ▶ Direct Mail


- ▶ Event Management
- ▶ Forms and Surveys

Waterkeepers, land trusts, watershed associations and other conservation nonprofit organizations can receive 10,000 free mail credits per month.

For more information, please visit [waterwordsthatwork.com/do-it-yourself-tools/message-blaster](http://waterwordsthatwork.com/do-it-yourself-tools/message-blaster).

cont. from page 13

over 1,000 and raised \$12,500 to support their fish collection to test for mercury, after competing in two of these competitions. In the first competition, the organization came in second place. The organization recruited a handful of young-ish members who had been involved in organizing a fundraising party, a major action on the involvement scale. These enthusiastic members took to Facebook and used their substantial networks to get votes and gain new social activists for the organization.

By the time the second grant opportunity came up (this one by River Network and MillerCoors), the organization had a network of social activists who had demonstrated that they were willing to vote and spread the word. This time, the organization placed first in the competition. 

*Chandra Brown and Eric Eckl help river groups plan and carry out advocacy campaigns across the country. Chandra served as Ogeechee Riverkeeper from 2001 to 2011. Eric founded Water Words That Work LLC in 2008.*

## Message Testing Online Tools

If focus groups, telephone polls and other fancy message research testing techniques cost too much and take too long, take a fresh look in your online advocacy tool box for some low cost and high quality alternatives. Using a technique called A/B testing, you can evaluate which words and images have more appeal to the people who receive your message.

**Email** – Email blast programs allow you to send batches of emails and see which works better. For example, if more people open an email with the subject line “Help us save the Green River before it’s too late” than “Help us save the Green River watershed,”



then you just learned something important about what words work. Apply that lesson to your bumper stickers, yard signs, t-shirts, PowerPoint presentations and more.

**Facebook** – Facebook offers a terrific advertising program for river groups. For a small amount (as little as \$30) you can test create batches of ads and see which ones draw more attention—is it the ad with the fish or the ad with the little girl’s face or the ad with the logo? Which ad sends the most users to your website? Which ad are people most likely to share with their friends?

**Telephone** – Send robocall notices of upcoming meetings to your members. Split your list and create two messages. For example, create one that touts great barbecue that will be served, and one that touts the great band you have lined up. Which call produces more RSVPs? Now you know which is the bigger draw.

## Just the Facts

# Nonprofits and Issue Advocacy

Let us kick this off right: nonprofits, including 501(c)(3) charities, not only may engage in advocacy, including legislative lobbying, but should do so.

The last eighty years of tax law makes clear that as a matter of public policy, we wish to encourage charities to speak up. Imagine water policy if charities were fully muzzled—it is important for all of us to have a full public debate on important issues; fortunately, our tax law reflects this. Prior to 1930, however, all lobbying was indeed prohibited:

**1930** – The Slee case strips 501(c)(3) status from Margaret Sanger’s American Birth Control League; judicial opinion is pained, but concludes ‘the law is the law.’

**1934** – Congress responds and adds “no substantial part” language to Section 501(c)(3); nonprofits feared to test that limit.

**1970** – Congress adds Section 501(h): an objective expenditure test for public charity lobbying (which requires charities to take action to “elect” the clearer, safer standard), and provides allowable (“non-taxable”) limits. This is the “20%” you may have heard of (see pages 16-17).

**1990** – IRS adopts final “Regs” (regulations) fully defining the expenditure test.



By Terry Miller  
River Network  
[www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org)

## The Origins of Myth

So, why the all-too-common myth that “nonprofits must not engage in advocacy”?

- ▶ First, 501(c)(3)s of all types are strictly prohibited from intervening in candidate elections—either for or against. No politics, in the small “p” sense, no electioneering. But, ballot measures are different; they count as lobbying. (Words are not the same as law, but it may be best to avoid the word “political” in describing program work.) In truly egregious cases, penalties are possible on individuals as well as the charity, with or without loss of 501(c)(3) status.
- ▶ Second, the “action organization regulations” require reasonable discourse. “An organization may be educational even though it advocates a particular position or viewpoint, so long as it presents a sufficiently full and fair exposition of the pertinent facts as to permit an individual or the public to form an independent opinion or conclusion. On the other hand, an organization is not educational if its principal function is the mere presentation of unsupported opinion.”

*cont. on page 16*

501(c)(3)

cont. from page 15

The key law in this area settled in 1980 and 1983. *Big Mama Rag v. U.S. Treasury* broadened “public education” to include positions that might be anathema to the public, if presented reasonably, and *National Alliance v. United States*, wherein the court approved criteria for measuring “full and fair exposition.”<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ There is also the requirement to engage in activities that are not illegal, or [the more dangerously vague] contrary to public policy.<sup>2</sup> The first part can pose problems in espousing civil disobedience, such as Greenpeace, though apparently “incidental” activities escape.<sup>3</sup> The second public policy principle came up when Bob Jones University was denied 501(c)(3) status for barring mixed race marriages among its students.

So, no problem! You cannot work for or against politicians running for office, and you must present some reasoned basis for positions you advocate (very rarely any shortage of that in the environmental world!). As bad as it can appear, advocacy on watershed preservation or even human-caused global warming is not [yet?!] “in contravention of public policy.”

## Public Policy Work & Legislative Lobbying

Provided you take a reasoned approach to your work and avoid candidate electioneering, the only limits you face are about how much legislative lobbying you can do. Note “legislative”—you may do unlimited work around:

- ▶ how the executive branch makes and enforces rules;
- ▶ corporate policy;
- ▶ judicial strategies including litigation; and
- ▶ communication with a legislative body about a broad social problem that stops short of being a specific legislative proposal.

These are all pure charitable public education—even trying to educate legislators! (You can thank the pioneering women of *Big Mama Rag*!).

## Election to Make Expenditures to Influence Legislation

Public charity<sup>4</sup> 501(c)(3)s have two methods to define their legislative lobbying limits.

1. **Substantial part test** under Section 501(c)(3)—a potentially subjective “facts and circumstances” analysis. “No substantial part” of an organization’s activities can be “carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation.”
2. **Expenditure test** under Sections 501(h) and 4911—an objective mathematical test. Using Form 5768, a charity must elect to have the expenditure test apply. Takes effect at the beginning of the year in which it is filed.

Most experts agree that if you will do anything more than incidental lobbying, you should make the election. Electing via Form 5768 is viewed as the better choice because:

<sup>1</sup> For technical detail you can easily search for and read “Rev Proc 86-43.” For colorful background I call “lesbians win, racists lose”, you can easily search for and read the two cases cited. I can also forward a longer packet with each of those and additional documents on request. These include a complaint to IRS in 2002 from Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise attacking the Environmental Working Group for excess / prohibited advocacy; my read is that, if anything, it pointed to poorly constructed Forms 990 by EWG.

<sup>2</sup> Good IRS piece: [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotoopicj85.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/eotoopicj85.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Greenpeace successfully survived an IRS audit in 2006 that touched on this subject but focused mostly on inter-entity separation; audit opinion was published with the organization’s name stated, very unusual move by IRS.

<sup>4</sup> Private foundations are also 501(C)(3)s and have special stricter rules because of their narrow financial support.



- ▶ The test is objective. Otherwise, it's hard to know if IRS will consider impact, volunteer effort and/or reputation, besides just dollars spent;
- ▶ For non-electing organizations, "substantial" is not defined, even in dollars (some court cases suggest 5%, but it is not certain);
- ▶ Electing organizations report only the total spent for lobbying and for grassroots lobbying; non-electing report "yes/no" on various granular sub-activities, as well as lobbying expenses broken out by line item.
- ▶ Non-electing organizations must attach a detailed narrative.
- ▶ Finally, if you do go over the limit, there's a tax to pay for electing organizations but flat revocation of 501(c)(3) status for non-electing organizations (death penalty!).

## Allowances under the Expenditure Test

If you make the election, then you will be able to calculate two allowances: for total lobbying and for grassroots lobbying (which is always 25% of total). The opposite of grassroots is direct, and so this means you could spend from 100% on direct and 0% on grassroots to 75% on direct and 25% grassroots. The total allowance is based on "exempt purpose expenditures," which for many small groups means all your expenses. The total allowance is a sliding scale:


- 20% of first \$500K
- 15% of next \$500K
- 10% of next \$500K
- 5% of all over \$1.5M...

with a total maximum allowance of \$1M (which occurs when exempt purpose expenditures hit \$17M).

Managed carefully, 501(h) is quite permissive. Some examples: 1) Work on ballot measures and referenda is "direct lobbying" (the larger allowance) because the public is sitting as the legislature. 2) Communications specifically with members (donors of more than a nominal amount of time or money in the prior year—not just voting members; communication can go to up to 15% non-members as well!) is direct lobbying, not grassroots as if it is akin to a staff meeting planning a set of legislative meetings. 3) There is a type of reasoned, widely distributed communication called Nonpartisan Analysis Study and Research; qualified communications may advocate a position on legislation and not count as lobbying, and is very suitable for environmental policy work.



And finally, much of what we do in the world of rivers is about Executive Branch rulemaking and administrative action. There is no limit on that.

One caveat is that we have not touched on ethics-based rules, which federally are called the Lobbying Disclosure Act, but can have State, County and even Municipal equivalents, intended, usually, to measure the role of money in the making of laws, and may not be as permissive or limited in scope as 501(h) or tax exemption generally. This article has been about 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. 

*Terry Miller has more technical information that he is happy to share. Excellent educational materials are published by Alliance for Justice at [www.afj.org](http://www.afj.org) and Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest at [www.clpi.org](http://www.clpi.org).*

We asked the watershed conservation community about their experiences with leading advocacy campaigns. From lessons-learned to strategies, here is what they shared.

## Challenge Decisions

For decades, the Ipswich River experienced extreme low-flow and no-flow events, resulting in large fish kills, poor water quality and other damage to the environment. As a result, in 2003, American Rivers ranked the Ipswich River as the third most endangered river in America.

The Ipswich River Watershed Association's (IRWA) Advocacy Campaign challenged Massachusetts state agency decisions about water allocation and transfers. The primary challenge was a lawsuit that IRWA and several partners filed against the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) in 2003, alleging (among other claims) that MassDEP acted in violation of the state Water Management Act, which governs large water withdrawals. The lawsuit motivated MassDEP to issue new water withdrawal permits requiring more effective water conservation, including flow-triggered restrictions on outdoor watering and a summer cap on withdrawals. The litigation also eventually led to a 2009 decision by the Massachusetts Appeals Court, which agreed



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with IRWA's claim that MassDEP was in violation of state law by issuing permits without determining how much water the river could safely provide. The Appeals Court remanded the case to MassDEP on this issue, which is still pending. IRWA also appealed an interbasin transfer approval, helping lay the foundation for the Town of Reading to stop using wells that had pumped the upper Ipswich River dry for decades. That section of the river now has continuous flow, even during drought periods.

To support the Advocacy Campaign, IRWA raised more than \$200,000 from 354 donors. These funds included \$7,000 from other nonprofits, \$11,250 from corporations, \$50,000 in foundation grants and \$132,021 from individual donors. Using the blog on our website, we were able to garner more than 200 signers to a petition within 48 hours. This got the attention of officials at a critical time.

IRWA benefited enormously from the expert legal representation by Margaret Van Deusen, General Counsel of the Charles River Watershed Association, which shared the legal costs. IRWA was also fortunate and grateful to receive some *pro bono* representation from the Conservation Law Foundation, Stern Shapiro Weissberg & Garin LLP and Ropes & Gray LLP. IRWA's Executive Director, Kerry Mackin, heads up the Advocacy Campaign; she is a 2007 River Network River Hero.

Ipswich River Watershed Association (MA)  
[www.ipswichriver.org](http://www.ipswichriver.org)



©jean185 - Flickr Creative Commons

Ipswich River at sunset

## Patton Valley Coalition Prevails

The Patton Valley Coalition promoted community-based efforts to integrate protection of community, cultural and natural resources along the upper Tualatin River (OR) and pre-empt construction of the Mt. Richmond Dam by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The adjacent Scoggins Valley was flooded in 1974 to create Henry Hagg Lake. Both projects were proposed to generate flood control, irrigation and recreation benefits.

For over 30 years, Patton Valley residents were primarily responsible for blocking progress on the Mt. Richmond project, but by the 1980s, Washington County's significant population growth and political climate provided project momentum.



During the Coalition's startup phase, over a dozen valley residents coordinated fundraising events, produced newsletters and advocated for valley

protection. Through extensive volunteer research, it was determined that Patton Valley contained valuable resources of interest to local, but uninvolved stakeholder groups, such as affordable rental housing, Native American rock carvings and salmon spawning areas.

Regional stakeholder organizations were engaged to support Coalition goals through a series of presentations and tours. The Coalition secured support from the Washington County Service Providers, Forest Grove Historical Society and Northwest Steelheaders. Additional outreach and involvement to local political candidates played a large role in terminating federal funding for project planning.

The key Coalition campaign lesson was to conduct a comprehensive inventory of at-risk resources, determine which organizations and stakeholders would be motivated to support Patton Valley preservation and conduct related outreach and mobilization activities.

Patton Valley Coalition (OR)

## Swimmable Charles Initiative

Advocacy is an important part of the work of the Charles River Conservancy (CRC), in fact, you might be aware of our effort to bring back swimming. Our advocacy work involved helping to pass legislation which asked for a Governor appointed commission. This commission is now at work, and the CRC is staffing that commission with funds we raise from foundations and corporations.



Swimming in the Charles River

As part of the work for the Commission, Karen Patterson Greene, the person in charge of our Swimmable Charles Initiative, has gathered over half a dozen agencies, nonprofits and institutions of higher learning to participate in water and sediment testing and brought them all together for workshops where all the collected data is presented. These gatherings are not only an excellent way to bring all the pertinent data to one place, but also to form a coalition of partners all engaged in finding a solution to making the Charles swimmable. The workshops have been very well received. And the summaries are then presented to the Commission members.

In terms of lessons learned, we can't reiterate enough how important it has been to collect high-quality, location-specific water quality data to support our Swimmable Charles Initiative. When the Commission began its work, there was a great deal of water quality data already available, however most of it had been collected on a once-a-month basis and none of it from the specific locations being considered for swimming. As a result, we embarked on a project to collect daily water quality samples from each of the potential swimming locations for two summers in a row. We now have a high-quality data set that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health feels very good about and will enable that agency to support our efforts moving forward.

Charles River Conservancy (MA)  
[www.charlesriverconservancy.org](http://www.charlesriverconservancy.org)

## Tenacious & Credible Advocacy

Tenacity and credibility are the key to all advocacy efforts. Credibility ensures our place at decision-making tables and keeps us as trusted informants to the media. Most importantly, fair, truthful and credible accounts of the situation ensure a greater possibility that allies will join in our campaign. Working from the heart and maintaining a high level of honesty and commitment to the truth is what wins advocacy battles. When we enter into advocacy campaigns, it is clear that those that we tend to oppose have a great deal of resources and would rather we are not involved. In order to counteract the abundance of resources that developers have, we must maximize our strategic alliances, utilize earned media as much as possible and be able to tell a story that touches hearts of funders and allies, awakens a sense of urgency, ensures trust and confidence and provides solid science and feasible alternatives.

We, in the river protection movement face difficult odds to get past polluters to clean up their mess and to prevent unwise and destructive development. Clearly, advocacy campaigns are a matter of the heart that can't be perceived as a job. We are fighting for our planet, the health of all species and future generations. There is little room for "clock punchers" in intense advocacy campaigns. If we intend to succeed, we must be tenacious and give it our all. We must not embrace just one tactic and falsely believe that we are taking care of the situation.

Successful advocacy requires cunning and tenacious actions that result in diverse and multi-pronged strategies, a broad group or strategic partners, ongoing media and education on all levels and the constant pursuit of funding and in-kind resources.

Creativity is equally important, as we must find ways to unite allies and galvanize our efforts. Look for uniting/rallying calls; such as "Save the Salmon," "Stop Avatar of Alaska" and "We Can't Eat Coal." Look to expand the dialogue both regionally and globally, which may include issues such as Climate Change. Also, highlight how precedence may be set if the



*Alsek River - A wilderness river flowing from the Yukon into Northern British Columbia and into Alaska*

development was to move forward. For example: if this refuge can be opened for development, then all refuges are at risk.

In a recent conversation with past River Hero, Gershon Cohen, he stated, "The first step in designing a winning advocacy campaign is to understand who will make the ultimate decision. Once you know that, you can develop strategies for getting the decision you desire. A "win" may require litigation, legislation, rulemaking, a market based strategy—or some combination of the above. Many well-intentioned efforts are unsuccessful because of a failure to accurately visualize what form success must take. It is also important to remember that all the facts in the world may not matter—who you know may be more important than what you know. We were able to save the Tatshenshini/Alsek River system from becoming one of the world's largest copper mines because a high-ranking Clinton administration official floated the river and became passionate about protecting the area."

**Rob Rosenfeld**  
Former Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (AK)

## A Call to Action Dirty Dozen 2011

Comprised of more than 180 organizations and businesses, the Georgia Water Coalition is viewed as the leading voice for water protection in Georgia. In celebration of its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Georgia Water Coalition created *Dirty Dozen 2011*, a campaign highlighting the worst offenses against Georgia's water. Most offenses are consequences of an under-funded state environmental agency and a lack of political will to aggressively enforce laws that protect water, land and people.

The Georgia Water Coalition annually will publish the list as a call to action for the state's leaders and its citizens to come together to correct the pollution problems and threats to the waters detailed in the *Dirty Dozen*. What unites each of the *Dirty Dozen* examples is that in practically every case, the waters are being abused in ways that benefit a few, but harm many—including property owners, downstream communities, fish and wildlife, hunters and anglers, boaters and swimmers and more. A broken system allows these problems to occur and continue without resolution, often with catastrophic consequences.

### The Process

A call for nominations was sent out to all Coalition members. Once the 'winners' were selected by a committee, support from a funder allowed the group to hire a consulting firm to assist with the logo, graphics and layout for the report. Each of the twelve offenses includes background information about the polluter, the river, the impacts and recommended actions.

### The Results

The report was distributed in conjunction with a media strategy. Coalition members called reporters directly to ensure statewide media coverage. Thirty-six media outlets, including television, radio and newsprint, picked up the story. Additionally, the report was delivered to the Department of Natural Resources' board. A presentation was created for coalition partners to use at community meetings, and the report will also be used during the upcoming 2012 legislative session



### Lessons Learned (about Campaigns)

1. Start early, it takes more time than you think.
2. Even if you start late, go for it. Do what you can and improve on your efforts next time.
3. Build a team with the skills and contacts you need to pull off your plan, and designate a point person who understands all the moving pieces of the campaign to make sure they are coordinated, timelines are met and provides everyone with regular updates on the campaign's implementation.
4. The groups that created the campaign have worked together for many years and represent diverse skills (political, legal, technical, writing/graphic, grassroots organizing) so the give-and-take in developing the campaign—while always lively!—occurred in a setting where trust has been built.



[www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm](http://www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm)

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (GA)

[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

and

Georgia River Network (GA)

[www.garivers.org](http://www.garivers.org)

# Virginia's Shenandoah Valley

## Organizing to Slow the Gas Drilling Rush

By Megan Gallagher  
Shenandoah Valley  
Network  
[www.svnva.org](http://www.svnva.org)

**W**hy did the pro-business leaders of a conservative rural county in Virginia decide to hold the natural gas industry at bay? They listened to concerned citizens and credible local conservation advocates.

In the heart of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, Rockingham County supervisors opted to "table" a gas company's request two years ago to drill Virginia's first Marcellus shale gas well. Today, elected officials remain skeptical that current regulations and oversight will protect their community from the impacts of a controversial drilling technique, known as hydrofracking, which has overwhelmed communities in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

In two years, the Shenandoah Valley Marcellus shale campaign expanded from debate over a local permit to an array of regional, state and federal issues. The campaign offers grassroots organizing principles that may be helpful to other conservation groups facing major public policy challenges.

## 6 Principles of Grassroots Organizing

### Leverage Partnerships

The Shenandoah Valley's advocacy groups collaborate often. Local leaders include Shenandoah Valley Network's (SVN) Director Kate Wofford, Rockingham Community Alliance for Preservation's (CAP) Kim Sandum, Shenandoah Riverkeeper Jeff Kelble, Trout Unlimited's Seth Coffman and Friends of the

North Fork of the Shenandoah River's Leslie Watson.

They learned of the proposed well in Rockingham in February 2010, just days prior to a public hearing. Houston-based Carizzo (Marcellus) LLC had received state approval and only needed a county special use permit to begin drilling a test well in a remote rural area.

Local partners corralled as much information as possible, settled on tone and messages, and used every resource to get the word out to Rockingham residents and officials. At the hearing, supervisors listened to concerned citizens and declared they did not have enough information to act on the permit request. It was tabled indefinitely.

The campaign soon gained regional and national partners, including Southern Environmental Law Center, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Earthworks. Each provides critical legal, political and scientific expertise.

### Understand Local Context

The Marcellus shale campaign reflects factors unique to the Shenandoah Valley, where there is no history of intensive energy production, no urgency to swap traditional land uses for industrial gas drilling and growing concern about the health of public drinking water supplies.

Rockingham County, Virginia's top agricultural producer, enjoys healthy economic sectors in farming, forestry and tourism, and enforces

zoning that preserves rural lands. The five supervisors share local pride in the county's rural heritage and working landscapes. They are wary of rural industrialization.

The Valley's Marcellus shale deposits lie in watersheds critical to public water supplies. The proposed well site lies in the floodplain at the headwaters of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, a major drinking water source. The George Washington National Forest—more than one million acres in the Shenandoah Valley and a third of the land in Rockingham County—contains extensive shale deposits and provides drinking water to 260,000 Valley residents.

## Build Relationships Before a Crisis

Rockingham citizen and CAP Director Kim Sandum worked closely with local supervisors long before the natural gas issue emerged. CAP built credibility through its support for effective land use policies and reasonable transportation plans.

So supervisors trusted Kim when she raised questions about the gas well permit. They asked her to sit in on the county meeting with the well applicant and to join them on the 10-hour round trip to West Virginia's Wetzell County to witness the impacts of poorly regulated gas drilling.

The Rockingham group saw farm land bulldozed for wastewater holding ponds and drilling pads, narrow rural roads chewed up by heavy truck traffic, extensive pipeline development on farm and forest land, compressors that run all night and mountain streams sucked dry. They heard from emergency service staff struggling to deal with truck accidents and tankers leaking wastewater.

## Virginia Partners Marcellus Shale Gas Campaign

Shenandoah Valley Network  
Community Alliance for Preservation  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Trout Unlimited  
Potomac Riverkeeper  
Shenandoah Riverkeeper  
Virginia League of Conservation Voters  
Shenandoah Forum  
Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River  
Virginia Conservation Network

Kim returned able to describe the impacts of hydrofracking first hand to other Rockingham leaders and civic groups. Constituent calls and letters are essential to any grassroots campaign, but trusted local advocates like Kim are invaluable.

## Provide Cover for Elected Officials

County leaders and other office holders also need trustworthy, local information to make and stand by good decisions. Campaign partners generated a range of reports, maps and analyses to reinforce supervisors' concerns about gas drilling.

SVN documented gas leases throughout the Valley by searching deeds in county courthouses. So far, 13,000 acres in Rockingham and 2,200 in nearby Frederick County were leased since Marcellus shale speculation began in 2007.

Southern Environmental Law Center mapped Marcellus shale and public drinking water resources on the George Washington National Forest, and SVN mapped shale gas leases and water resources in Rockingham County. SVN engaged a hydrologist to outline the risks of gas drilling in a floodplain and refute claims that state regulations fully protect water quality. The campaign cited *ProPublica's* report that Virginia employed just nine inspectors to oversee 5,821

*cont. on page 24*

cont. from page 23

gas and oil wells in 2008. Advocates outlined the constraints on Valley water supplies and wastewater treatment capacity.

SVN joined with Friends of the North Fork in 2011 to record baseline water quality near the proposed well site, data critical to document future contamination. Volunteers and Eastern Mennonite University students collect samples monthly for testing in the university's lab.

## Choose Language that Resonates

In the conservative Shenandoah Valley, they don't use terms like "smart growth," "sustainable resources" or "environmental health." They "build strong communities," "preserve farms, forests and wildlife" and "protect clean drinking water." They rarely say "no." They say "how about this?"

The first campaign flier reflected the community's proclivity toward caution: "Slow Down on Natural Gas Mining in Rockingham County." It encouraged residents: "Ask your supervisor to take a sensible approach...wait until (we) fully understand the safeguards needed before granting the permit...work with state officials, water quality and industry experts to establish responsible practices."

Even as the campaign grows more pointed, contrasting Rockingham's traditional rural land uses with the questionable economic benefits and high community costs of gas drilling, outreach materials maintain a tone that reflects local values.

## Look for Game Changers


George Washington National Forest managers are revising a plan to guide forest land uses for the next 15 years. For four years, Valley conservation partners worked toward modest improvements

in the new plan to protect drinking water. Then Marcellus gas drilling emerged as a threat.

Valley partners jettisoned the old strategy to pursue a more ambitious goal: a ban on hydrofracking on public lands. SVN secured resolutions from Rockingham, Shenandoah and Augusta Counties and the cities of Harrisonburg and Staunton. Partners generated hundreds of comments from Valley residents.

Campaign leaders were thrilled when the draft management plan, released in 2011, proposed a ban on horizontal gas drilling (hydrofracking) on the entire forest. They shifted the campaign into higher gear: flood the Forest Service with public support for the proposed ban.

Thanks to national email alerts from Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, Choose Clean Water Coalition and others, the Forest Service received more than 53,000 comments by the October deadline. The great majority supported the drilling ban. Campaign leaders are optimistic that the final forest plan, to be released in early 2012, will include the ban on horizontal gas drilling.

The Shenandoah Valley campaign is far from over, as federal and state agencies have a long way to go before Marcellus shale drilling is regulated and monitored adequately. Even then, SVN and its partners say they will continue to find ways to bolster local skepticism about the compatibility of industrial gas drilling and the rich rural heritage in the Shenandoah Valley. 

For more information on the Shenandoah Valley Marcellus shale campaign, visit [www.svnva.org](http://www.svnva.org) or [www.PreserveRockingham.org](http://www.PreserveRockingham.org)

Conservation consultant Megan Gallagher of The Plains, Virginia provides strategic planning and communications guidance to nonprofit groups, including Shenandoah Valley Network and Rockingham CAP.



# The Gulf Future Collaboration

## Maintaining Collaboration Among Diverse Groups



By Cyn Sarthou  
Gulf Restoration  
Network  
[www.healthygulf.org](http://www.healthygulf.org)

In 2010, Gulf Restoration Network (GRN) and its partners recognized that fishing, community, justice and environmental advocates working to monitor the BP drilling disaster in the Gulf of Mexico needed to be at the forefront of efforts to ensure a long-term coastal, marine and community recovery. In order for this to happen, it was critical that regional activists be convened to learn from each other's experiences during this disaster and plan the path towards a sustainable Gulf and more resilient communities. On October 4-6, 2010, and again March 14-16, 2011, GRN partnered with the Gulf Coast Fund and Waterkeeper Alliance's Save Our Gulf campaign to organize conferences around the theme: Gulf Gathering: A United Response to the BP Disaster. These conferences brought together over 100 members of the Gulf nonprofit community, representing over 50 community, conservation, fishing and environmental justice organizations.

The Gatherings were far from simply conventions or conferences. At the first Gulf Gathering, participants developed a set of principles that attendees believe should guide recovery and restoration of the Gulf's natural resources and communities: the Weeks Bay Principles for Gulf Recovery (the Principles). At the second Gathering, participants developed and agreed to work collaboratively to implement the Gulf Future Unified Action Plan for a Healthy Gulf (the Action Plan), focused on the realization of the principles. Both the Principles and the Action Plan focus on four areas of concern for the participating groups: (1) public health, (2) community restoration and resiliency, (3) coastal restoration and (4) marine restoration.

The Gulf Future collaboration has succeeded in engaging and keeping members from diverse perspectives and communities active in campaign implementation. We believe our success stems from member participation in development of both the Principles and the Action Plan, dedicating a full-time staff member to outreaching to and involving members in the work of the collaborative, and the use of the full panoply of available communication tools to inform and engage participant groups.

The conveners of the Gatherings understood that involvement of all 105 attendees in identifying the areas of concern (described above), drafting of the principles (often down to word choices) applicable to each and the plan of action was central to the success of the collaboration. This process allowed all participants, groups and individuals alike, to ensure that issues of import to them were included in the Principles and a focus of the Action Plan.

The GRN also understood that effective multi-organizational participation in a campaign does not happen without some level of focused communication and continuing member outreach. So, the GRN assigned a staff member to act as the Recovery Campaign Coordinator. The coordinator organizes calls and regularly communicates both by phone and email with partner groups, seeking to better engage them in campaign implementation.

Ultimately, we believe that Gulf Future partners have remained active, and the campaign has been able to continue to move forward because the following key logistical approaches underscored

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our fundamental guidelines to build trust and confidence, be inclusive, act and communicate with full transparency and ground our collective decisions in science.

## Key Approaches

**Work Groups:** Work groups were formed to focus on advancing the specific campaign goals, and hold weekly or monthly conference calls to share information, receive campaign updates, develop strategies for moving forward, assign tasks and maintain accountability of organizations who have committed to working together. Weekly or monthly calls also help to ensure that the groups are not duplicating efforts, and that the collaboration is connecting groups together who are working on similar issues.

**Bi-weekly e-newsletter:** A Gulf Future newsletter goes out every other week with listings for relevant events, hearings, action alerts, work group minutes and other relevant information

**Weekly Outreach Calls:** The Coordinator makes weekly calls to coalition members to check in with them, remind them of deadlines for work product and to find out what they are working on that overlaps with the collaboration's work.

**Face to Face Meetings:** We believe that face to face meetings are critical for continued member engagement. The Gulf Future groups have held two conferences or gatherings resulting in the creation of the Principles and the Action Plan. In August 2011, we held a half day meeting to celebrate collaboration achievements and to focus the attending groups on next steps; we intend to hold a third conference of all the groups in 2012.

**Weeks Bay Google Group:** Using this list-serve has allowed for the transfer and dissemination of information to the groups and




individuals. Anyone is allowed to post, so there is transparency in all communication.

**Gulf Future website:** The website ([www.gulffuture.org](http://www.gulffuture.org)) has a page for shared resources where reports, sign-on letters and other resources that might be useful to the groups are housed.

**Using Social Media:** Gulf Future uses Facebook and Twitter to share news and events and to cross post information received from the collaborative's members.

As with all collaborations, some Gulf Future members are much more engaged than others. We believe this could be addressed in the future through:

- ▶ Establishment of a communications and media group that coordinates regularly on new stories and events that is led by those with communications experience and media contacts, and
- ▶ Development of formal strategies to:
  - re-engage groups that become disengaged; and
  - continue to build trust between the groups.

We understand that as the BP drilling disaster fades further from the nation's awareness, it will be up to the groups who make up the Gulf Future collaboration to remind the nation of the ongoing effects of BP's remaining oil, and the ecosystem and community impacts that BP and our governmental agencies must be held accountable for. The Gulf Future collaborative is therefore an even more important vehicle to empower an authentic community response. 

## Join the Waterkeeper Alliance's Campaign Celebrating 40 Years of Clean Water and Healthy Communities

**N**early 40 years ago, Congress signed into law a historic piece of legislation that would turn the tide of our polluted waterways and hold big polluters accountable for their actions and attacks on the health of our communities. Prior to the Clean Water Act's enactment, the Cuyahoga River was so polluted that it was literally in flames, the majestic Hudson River's fishery was gone and Lake Erie was declared all but dead. This bold legislation put forward by visionaries in Congress returned control of our nation's waterways to the citizens of the United States as part of the public trust. However, today the concept of the public trust, the commons, is being quickly eroded by corporate polluters and those in Congress who are determined to return to the era of using out nation's waterways as open sewers, toxic dumps and landfills.

Despite the fact that the Clean Water Act has been responsible for providing millions of Americans with opportunities to swim, drink and fish in clean water, every branch of our federal government—the legislative, executive and judicial—has taken aim at the Act. The courts have worked to narrow the definition of “waters of the United States,” and Congress has made efforts to continually chip away at the Act. Many states have even joined the party, cutting clean water enforcement budgets every time they face a fiscal challenge. Now, as we celebrate 40 years of clean water protections, our Congress is launching the most aggressive, nefarious attacks on our right to clean water in history.

As the Clean Water Act moves into its 40<sup>th</sup> year, it faces a midlife crisis not of its own doing, but by members of Congress who put the interest of the



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By Pete Nichols  
Waterkeeper Alliance  
[www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org)

public aside to do the bidding of the corporate polluters that fill their campaign coffers. If their efforts succeed, they will cripple contemporary American democracy and undermine the most extraordinary body of environmental law in the world. We, as the voices of clean water, cannot allow that to happen.

Most recently, in the latter months of 2011, a myriad of bills before the U.S. House of Representatives have been laden with extraneous amendments and anti-environmental ‘riders’ that seek to dismantle our environmental protections piecemeal, or, as in the case of one of these bills, the cynically named Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011 (H.R. 2018), which would seek to take a sledgehammer to the very foundation of the Clean Water Act.

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The bill takes aim at the Clean Water Act, which has become a global model for water protection. Seeking to strip the federal government's authority to regulate water quality standards and weaken EPA's power to enforce the law when states fail to protect waterways, this approach will start a race to the bottom as shortsighted and self-interested state politicians dismantle their clean water laws as payback to their supporters, including the nation's worst polluters. These bills, amendments and budget riders propose to gut the Clean Water Act and jeopardize the environmental health of our waterways and the lifeblood of our communities across the country, all without public debate.

In 2012 and beyond, Waterkeeper Alliance, River Network and our partners will work to remind Americans, and the world, that we have indeed come a long way from 1969 when the Cuyahoga River was burning. But we still have a long way to go to protect all of our waterways and attain Congress' 1972 goal to have eliminated all discharges of pollutants into navigable waters by 1985, a goal that clearly has not been achieved.



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## Campaign Goals

On the 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the Waterkeeper Alliance officially launched its Clean Water Act (CWA) 40 Campaign. The goal of CWA 40 is to bolster the imperiled Act through implementing a strategic series of coordinated efforts to celebrate, activate and advocate around the central tenets of the Act: swimmable, drinkable, fishable waters for all.

To make the most of this opportunity, the campaign will not only educate the public about the importance of the Act, but also activate and empower our coalition to influence national leaders from a policy and enforcement perspective. We will not stand for any attacks on our communities that undermine the clean water protections that our streams, rivers, lakes and estuaries have been afforded over the past 40 years.

## Strategies & Tactics

The three central components of the initiative will employ a variety of strategies and tactics that seek to attract diverse participation from clean water advocates across the country.

- 1. Celebrate:** A series of Swimmable, Drinkable and Fishable Water Action Days will celebrate the victories enabled by the Act and the basic fundamental right to clean water through high profile events around the nation and “virtual marches” on Washington, wherein we will target support for specific measures that will strengthen these three essentials. These Action Days will culminate in a major “Swim, Drink, Fish Rally” on the National Mall in October 2012, to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Clean Water Act.




**2. Activate:** Waterkeeper Alliance will activate a national alliance of environmental groups that work to protect clean water and develop a network of “Waterkeeper Clubs” on college campuses to engage young people in this effort. In addition, we will be working simultaneously with Waterkeepers and volunteers in communities across the country to educate citizens about the importance of clean water to the environment and the health of our communities.

In May of 2012, Waterkeeper Alliance is joining forces with River Network to hold the largest gathering of water advocates to date: River Rally 2012. More than 600 people will join together in Portland, Oregon to enhance their water-related technical skills, learn how to build the capacity of their organizations, share best practices for watershed protection and receive training on advocating for the Clean Water Act in their watersheds.

Waterkeeper Alliance plans to develop advocacy toolkits to aid in the education of River Rally attendees so they can return to their watersheds and educate members

of their communities on the value of clean water and the need to protect that right for all. By doing so, we will build a grassroots constituency that is rarely engaged in public policy, but are critical to protecting the Clean Water Act at a time when it remains under attack.

**3. Advocate:** Strategic regional and community-based advocacy is the most effective tool to turn back the rising tide against the Clean Water Act. Waterkeeper, and our partners, will organize and provide the tools for our coalition to push back against rollbacks to the Clean Water Act, while highlighting the critical need for continued and expanded protections within the Act, the most effective tool we have against water pollution.

While advocating for clean water and healthy communities has been the primary mission of Waterkeeper Alliance since its inception, the Clean Water Act’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary provides a unique opportunity for Waterkeeper Alliance and partners to focus on the success of the Act thus far, develop and deploy strategies for strengthening the Act and ensure the Act endures for another 40 years and beyond. 

*Please join us in this effort! Visit [www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org) and follow us at <http://twitter.com/waterkeeper> to learn more, or contact Pete Nichols, Western Regional Director of the Waterkeeper Alliance at [pnichols@waterkeeper.org](mailto:pnichols@waterkeeper.org) for more information.*

### Clean Water Act Anniversary Events

There are many Clean Water Act 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events taking place across the country in 2012. Clean Water Network is maintaining a calendar of all those events. To view the calendar, please visit [www.cleanwaternet.org/news-events/events/clean-water-act-40th-anniversary-events](http://www.cleanwaternet.org/news-events/events/clean-water-act-40th-anniversary-events). To add an event to the calendar, please send an email with the event details and contact information to: [cwnheadquarters@cwn.org](mailto:cwnheadquarters@cwn.org).



## Resources & References

### WEBSITES, PUBLICATIONS & TOOLS

**Google Grants** is a unique in-kind donation program awarding free AdWords advertising to select charitable organizations. They support organizations sharing our philosophy of community service to help the world in areas such as science and technology, education, global public health, the environment, youth advocacy and the arts.

[www.google.com/grants](http://www.google.com/grants)

#### Organize To Win

A Grassroots Activist's Handbook, by Jim Britell, is an online guide to help people organize community campaigns.

[www.britell.com/text/OrganizeToWin.pdf](http://www.britell.com/text/OrganizeToWin.pdf)

#### The Sierra Club Grassroots Organizing Training Manual

is used by the Sierra Club Training Academy program in a weekend-long training designed to simulate a campaign planning process. You can view, download or print this manual by chapter or in its entirety. To access the online files, enter in user name: "clubhouse" and password: "explore" when prompted to do so.

<http://rcellarius.us/SCGOTM.html>

#### Video Campaign Tip Sheet

Thinking of launching a video campaign on YouTube? This site provides some tips that will help to maximize your efforts.

[www.youtube.com/t/nonprofit\\_campaigns](http://www.youtube.com/t/nonprofit_campaigns)

### ORGANIZATIONS

Since 1973, the **Midwest Academy** has trained more than 30,000 activists in progressive organizations, unions and faith-based groups. Now in its fourth edition, *Organizing for Social Change* is a comprehensive manual for grassroots organizers working for social, racial, environmental and economic justice at the local, state and national levels. Visit their Reading Room for a variety of resources.

[www.midwestacademy.com/reading-room](http://www.midwestacademy.com/reading-room)

The **Community Tool Box** promotes community health and development by connecting people, ideas and resources. It is a global resource for free information on essential skills for building healthy communities. It offers more than 7,000 pages of practical guidance in creating change and improvement.

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>

### ONLINE PETITIONS

**Care2** is a social action network that empowers millions of people to lead a healthy, sustainable lifestyle and support socially responsible causes. Use Care2 Tools to spread the word about the things you care about most.

[www.care2.com](http://www.care2.com)

**Change.org** is the web's leading platform for social change, empowering anyone, anywhere to start petitions that make a difference.

[www.change.org](http://www.change.org)

# EcoWatch

Uniting the Voice of the Grassroots Environmental Movement  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE**  
The Voice for the World's Waters

**EW EcoWatch.org**

In October 2011, EcoWatch, in partnership with Waterkeeper Alliance, launched the online news service EcoWatch.org. The website works to unite the voice of the grassroots environmental movement and mobilize millions of people to engage in democracy to protect human health and the environment.

EcoWatch.org is the only media source to focus exclusively on the news from nearly 1,000 environmental organizations worldwide. In addition, the site showcases original content in its Insights column from leading national voices in the environmental movement.

EcoWatch.org is a dedicated platform for grassroots environmental organizations that helps transform the ability of individuals to learn about environmental issues and take action. This news service provides timely access to relevant information that motivates individuals to become engaged in their community, adopt sustainable practices and support strong environmental policy.

Interested in having your work promoted on the EcoWatch.org website and get listed as a collaborator with a link to your site? Email [nicole@ecowatch.org](mailto:nicole@ecowatch.org) for more information.



# River Network Partnership

*A Co-op of River & Watershed Organizations*

[www.rivernetwork.org/programs/partnership-program](http://www.rivernetwork.org/programs/partnership-program)

## Partnership Benefits

### Promote Yourself

- Advertise Jobs & Events
- Promote Blogs & e-Newsletters
- Sell Products through Our Marketplace

### Find Funding

- Grant Opportunity Alerts
- *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*
- NOZA Database of Charitable Funding

### Save Money on Goods & Services

- CC Payroll
- Global Water Monitoring Equipment
- Insurance
- Online Mapping
- Orion Magazine
- ProMotive.com
- Watergrass Database Design
- Wish Lists

### Learn More & Gather Info

- Toll-free Partner Hotline
- *eStream*
- One-on-One Assistance
- Publications
- Resource Library
- River Rally Conference

### Build Community

- Quarterly Webinars
- Listserv
- River Network Partner Logo
- Share Success Stories

## Partnership Staff

### Dawn DiFuria

*Partnership Program Manager*  
 ddifuria@rivernetwork.org  
 541-276-1083

### Cara Meyer

*Partnership Program Assistant*  
 cmeyer@rivernetwork.org  
 503-542-8395  
 Fax: 503-241-9256

## Partnership Benefit Highlight

### ProMotive

Join River Network's ProMotive Team. ProMotive.com is an online marketplace for professionals who have significant influence within their personal and professional communities. Staff and board of River Network Partner organizations can receive pro-deals (e.g., discounts of up to 60%) from over 143 companies, including Bending Branches, Wigwam, Teva, Camp Chef...even Jelly Belly.

Visit [www.promotive.com/rivernetwork](http://www.promotive.com/rivernetwork) for more details.

Because River Network Partners Should Never Have to Pay Full Price!

### 2011 Annual River Network Partner Dues

Nonprofit Organizations & Local, State & Tribal Government Partners	
Annual Budget	Annual Partner Dues
<\$25,000	\$150
\$25,001-\$100,000	\$200
\$100,001-\$250,000	\$275
\$250,001-\$500,000	\$375
\$500,001-\$1,000,000	\$500
\$1,000,001-\$2,000,000	\$675
>\$2,000,000	\$900
Business & Consultant Partners	
Annual Gross Revenue	Annual Partner Dues
<\$999,999	\$500
>\$1,000,000	\$1,000

**To renew, upgrade or join as a River Network Partner**, please mail this form with your check to River Network (520 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1130, Portland, OR 97204) or pay by credit card at [www.rivernetwork.org/marketplace](http://www.rivernetwork.org/marketplace).

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_  
 Org/Gov't/Business Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (with area code) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email (required) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

## Be a Sponsor

Sponsor a Partnership for a local group. If you know of an organization that needs financial assistance to become a River Network Partner, please complete this form and mail your check with the appropriate dues listed at left. River Network will contact the organization on your behalf with information on how to access all the great benefits described in the Partner brochure. Thank you!



# River Network

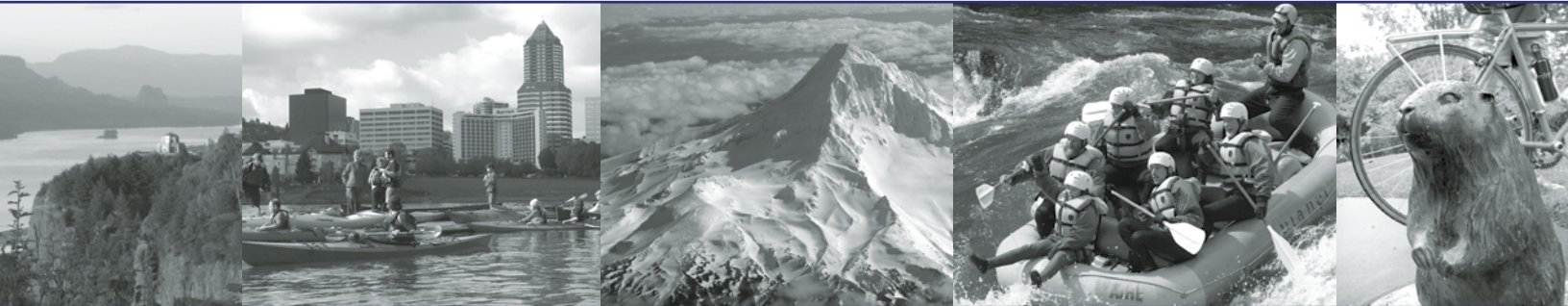
*Connecting People, Saving Rivers*

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Portland, OR 97204-1511

# River Rally 2012

A joint production of River Network & WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE



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*Education, Inspiration, Celebration*

**May 4-7**

**Portland, Oregon**

**[www.riverrally.org](http://www.riverrally.org)**



*Join Us!*