

The **V**olunteer *M*onitor

The National Newsletter of Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring
Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1993



Note: This information is provided for reference purposes only. Although the information provided here was accurate and current when first created, it is now outdated.

Special Topic: Staying Afloat Financially

In this issue, volunteer monitoring groups share their experiences and ideas on finding financial support for their programs. The options are many: grassroots fundraising (through memberships, donations, and special events); obtaining grants (foundation, government, and corporate); marketing services; and forming partnerships. Which approaches a group chooses will depend on its goals and circumstances, but certain general principles apply in any case:

- The more different funding sources you tap, the more secure your financial base will be.
- Ongoing support is usually harder to find than start-up funding; but since monitoring, by nature, is long-term, funding also needs to be long-term.
- Whoever is using the monitoring data - whether it's a government agency, a university, or the community - should be helping to pay for it.
- In-kind support, such as donations of technical expertise, equipment, or laboratory analysis, can be as much of a lifesaver as direct financial assistance. Money isn't the only thing that keeps monitoring groups afloat!

Co-Editors: Maryland Save Our Streams

It's time for the co-editors to get more credit for their work. Let me start by thanking the staff of Maryland Save Our Streams for their invaluable guidance with this issue. They join the ranks of previous co-editors with whom the editorial board and I have had the privilege of working: GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network), Spring 1993; Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership, Fall 1992; Adopt-A-Stream Foundation in Washington State, Spring 1992; and Rhode Island's Salt Pond Watchers and River Rescue (jointly), Fall 1991.

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Drawing Up a Program Budget

by Kathy Ellett

Many folks, when faced with the need to draw up a budget - whether for their personal expenses or for a local volunteer monitoring program - experience a full-blown panic attack. I happen to be one of those people myself - but somehow I have managed to put together a budget for the past eight years, which means that I am sure you can, too!

Let's assume that the Red Herring Watershed Association wants to organize a cadre of volunteers to collect water quality data from the Red Herring Creek and its tributaries. They are planning to implement a pilot program with 10 sites the first year, then expand to more sites in the second year.

If this group contacted me and asked for advice on preparing a budget, this is what I would tell them: It's fairly simple to figure out a realistic budget for a project that has been operating for at least a year. The **tough** job is drawing up a reasonably realistic budget for a brand-new project that is uniquely tailored to your particular situation and consequently requires some creative thinking.

Resource Categories

Regardless of the size of the project, a volunteer monitoring program's basic resource needs usually fall into the general categories listed below. While a new group may not have to make an actual cash outlay in every category, they still must plan how they will provide for each resource need. For example, if a group decides they don't have the luxury of hiring a paid staff or renting an office in the beginning, they will need to recruit volunteer staff and look for donated office space. And they should also start thinking about how much money will be needed to have paid staff and an office in the future.

Personnel - at first, just a program coordinator, full- or part-time, who may be a volunteer. When the program becomes large enough to require one or more paid staffers, salary will generally be the single most expensive item in the budget. Additional staff costs, such as employee benefits and taxes, must be accounted for also. These taxes, which vary from state to state and with type of organization, include FICA (social security), unemployment compensation insurance, and workmen's compensation insurance.

Capital expenditures - equipment that will be used for several years, such as computers, copiers, fax machines, desks, chairs, telephones, etc. Most small groups will try to get these items donated.

Office rental - including utilities and insurance. Small groups may be able to set up an office in a member's home.

Office support - supplies (paper, letterhead, envelopes, file folders, etc.; allow \$50 per month per person) and

communication-related expenses such as telephone bills (amount depends on amount of long-distance calling), fax, postage, photocopying, and subscriptions. If you are using your own photocopy machine, allow about 8 - 10 cents/copy to cover the cost of equipment depreciation.

Travel - for the coordinator and other training or advisory personnel. The amount needed will depend on the size of the geographic area covered by the project.

Monitoring equipment - including reagent refills for chemical kits (if used), replacement of worn or broken items, and (if applicable) cost of having samples analyzed by a professional lab. The cost of these items depends on the nature of the project and will vary widely from one project to another.

Training facilities - costs for room rental, supplies, and instruments for training and quality control sessions. It is nice to feed folks at these events, but potlucks are also popular.

Data management - data storage and retrieval, data analysis, and reports. Software packages that can plot and graph data are readily available. You may be able to recruit a volunteer with a computer to take on this task.

Publications - a manual that provides written protocols and methods for each monitor, and some sort of periodic newsletter to get information, announcements, and data reports to volunteers and other interested parties (such as funders).

Other possible expenses a group may incur include recruiting expenses, such as newspaper ads or mailings to potential volunteers and supporters; the cost of services such as accounting, auditing, or legal advice; and the cost of attending local or regional monitoring conferences.

Sample Budget: Pilot Program

The Red Herring Watershed Association has been fortunate enough to get donated office space, including use of office machines and telephone, at the local Community Center. Using the categories listed above, their first-year budget might look something like this (remember that this is a bare-bones budget for a new pilot project; as the program grows, so will the budget!):

Personnel	\$3,000
(program coordinator: college student 1 day/wk @ \$7/hr plus 18%)	
Capital expenditures (donated)	0
Office rental (donated)	0
Office support	800
(Community Center will pay phone bills)	
Travel	200
Monitoring equipment	1,000

(assume \$100 / site for 10 sites)

Training facilities 300

(main cost is refreshments)

Data management (provided by volunteers) 0

Publications 400

(newsletter and photocopied manual)

\$5,700

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What Makes an Effective Fundraising Program?

by Susan M. Handley

There is a lot of truth in the old saying that "fundraising is really friend-raising." Fundraising is not a quick in-and-out proposition - it requires the same cultivation and tending that friendships do. Unfortunately, though, most organizations approach their fundraising in much the same way one might look for a stand-in date for the prom: no long-term relationship anticipated.

Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket

The one universal component in successful fundraising is a diversified program. Economic conditions and competition for limited dollars can hurt one potential source of funding while leaving others untouched. To be truly successful, an organization needs to combine special events with membership drives, foundation solicitations, corporate sponsorship, and special one-time campaigns.

Case Statement

The first step in fundraising is writing the case statement. A case statement is a clear and *concise* (usually one to two pages) description of the organization, what it does, and what it is planning to do. It is based on the organization's long-range plan and mission statement.

The case statement is not written in terms of what the organization is or will be, but in terms of the benefits to the environment that are resulting from the presence of the organization. It should answer the questions, Why should anyone give us money? What is unique about our program?

The case statement becomes the basis for grant applications, solicitation letters, and speeches. Be sure to have the draft of the case statement reviewed by people not involved with the organization.

Fundraising Plan

The fundraising plan identifies which sectors of the community you will target as potential donors, the

amount you hope to raise from each sector, and the techniques you will use to approach the targets. Research into past donor patterns, amounts raised, and potential new sources of funding need to be incorporated into the plan.

Once the potential donors have been identified, develop a "donor profile" for each target sector. For example, suppose you have decided that senior citizens would be a good target sector. Ask yourself, Where do senior citizens go in this community? What do they read? The profile will help you plan how to reach this particular sector.

For each target sector you should also ask yourself, What needs of the donor will be met by making a contribution to our organization? Yes, donors do have needs that they expect to meet with a contribution. It could be a need to do something for the environment, or a need to further a business objective. People donate because they want to, not because you think they should.

Which Technique?

Next you need to choose the fundraising technique appropriate for your target audiences. All approaches incorporate the case statement and specific information from the donor profile. There are a myriad of possibilities, including face-to-face solicitation, phone-a-thons, direct mail, fee-based classes or workshops, membership drives, soliciting donations of money or services from local businesses, special events, income-earning or sales ventures, grant proposals to foundations and corporations, and "planned giving" solicitation (asking donors to mention your organization in a will or trust).

How to Ask

There is an art to asking. A good approach is to focus on removing reasons for saying no instead of trying to talk people into saying yes. Remember that the first question in someone's mind when asked to do something is, "What's in it for me?" The second question often is, "Can I trust that this person is telling the truth?" Design your presentation from the viewpoint of the potential donors. Answer their unstated questions so that they will concentrate on what you are saying.

For a personal contribution, the face-to-face approach is the best. According to the Center for Management Systems, face-to-face solicitation will produce \$50 for every \$10 generated from a phone call and \$1 from direct mail. And it's best if the asking is done by a person who would be seen as a peer by the potential donor. This means that the fundraiser needs to solicit the help of all types of people in the fundraising campaign. The fundraiser serves as the expert and sets up the logistics, but the asking is done by the peer.

Some other asking techniques to remember are:

- Ask on behalf of the environment, not in terms of your organization's needs.

- Don't apologize for asking. Your cause is deserving.
- Emphasize solutions, not problems.

Don't Forget to Say Thank You

Perhaps the biggest mistake fund developers make is to ignore the etiquette and manners that make for good relationships with donors. It is astounding how many organizations do an inadequate job of giving appropriate thanks to donors. Although large corporations and foundations may seem impersonal, they do record and remember when thanks have been given.

The best way to encourage today's \$25 or \$50 donors to become next year's major donors is to treat them as major donors today. Ideally the thank-you process should start with an immediate note, preferably handwritten, from the head of the organization. Six months later, whether required or not, send a progress report, being sure to mention the difference the donor's contribution has made. This lets donors know that they are friends of the organization and are seen as partners, not just money sources.

Since maintaining personalized contacts with donors is so time-consuming, the fund developer should constantly seek ways to use board members, volunteers, and other supporters of the organization to help with this work.

A lack of attention to these "friend-raising" manners can hurt your chances not only for obtaining repeat funding from old donors but also for obtaining new sources of funding. Donors talk to each other, and no one can afford a negative reputation!

Evaluation

The final step in the fundraising plan is evaluation. Answering the following questions will help you prepare next year's plan:

- Did we attain the dollar amounts listed in the plan?
- Did we reach our target donors?
- Which approaches worked? Which didn't?
- What were the main barriers to success?
- What were the "surprise" successes?

Competition for charitable funding is extremely keen, and is increasing. But if you make a commitment to invest the time and resources to thoroughly plan, implement, evaluate, and adjust your fundraising program, fundraising will continue to be a successful effort resulting in increasing returns.

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Where Funding for Volunteer Monitoring Comes From

by Eleanor Ely

What are the major sources of funding for volunteer monitoring? How diverse a funding base do programs typically have? And what kind of money are we talking about anyway - small change, or megabucks?

Until a few months ago, the answers to these questions could only be guessed. But now, for the first time, a database exists that can provide a picture of volunteer monitoring nationwide - not only where the money comes from, but also what kinds of monitoring data are being collected, by how many volunteers, on what water bodies, and for what purposes.

How the Statistics Were Obtained

In order to gather information for the updated edition of EPA's national directory of volunteer monitoring groups, survey questionnaires were sent out early in 1993 to the nearly 8,000 subscribers to The Volunteer Monitor newsletter. The directory, authored by Meg Kerr, Virginia Lee, Alan Desbonnet, Eleanor Ely, and Alice Mayo, will be available in early spring 1994 (watch for announcement in next issue of the newsletter).

The directory database provides informative statistics on many aspects of volunteer monitoring, some of which will be discussed in future issues of this newsletter. On the subject of funding, the questionnaire asked respondents first to report the approximate dollar amount of their annual budget, and then to estimate the percentage of total funding that came from various sources. Of the 529 groups returning surveys, 476 provided detailed answers to these questions, and an additional 32 provided partial information (for instance, check marks to indicate funding sources, but without annual percentages).

Annual Budgets

The reported figures for annual budgets should be taken as estimates, since many respondents were

uncertain of the exact figure. Also, even though the survey form instructed respondents to "refer only to the portion of your program devoted to volunteer monitoring," some noted that they had difficulty separating out volunteer monitoring costs from costs of other activities.

Reported annual budgets ranged from zero to \$500,000 with the 68 biggest budgets (greater than \$50,000) nicely balanced by 68 frugal programs who reported budgets of "zero" ([Table 1](#)). Many of the high-budget groups were either state-managed programs or large national or regional networks. (Some groups reported "zero" budgets did not count the value of donated kits, equipment, staff time, or in-kind services, whereas other groups did include the dollar value of such items in their budget figure. Thus there is often little real difference between a reported budget of "zero" and one of several hundred dollars.)

Overall, volunteer monitoring lives up to its reputation as a relatively low-cost undertaking. The median annual budget reported was \$3,905, with 64% of programs weighing in at \$10,000 or less.

Funding Sources

The survey form listed six funding source categories - state, federal, corporate, foundation, dues, and "other" - and asked respondents to estimate what percentage of their funding came from each. The survey also asked for names of specific funding sources; however, only a minority of respondents provided such specific information.

[Table 2](#) shows the number of programs that reported receiving funding (any amount) from each of the six sources. The category "other" ranked high: 43% of programs reported receiving some funds from this category, and for those programs "other" sources accounted for an average of 60% of the total annual budget. What sources are included in "other"? Respondents who named specific sources mentioned local government (town, county, etc.); school districts; local businesses, service clubs, and community groups; contributions from supporters; in-kind donations; and fundraising events. (Also, some may have chosen the category "other" when they were unsure which of the listed categories was most appropriate.)

Government at all levels emerges as a significant source of funding for volunteer monitoring, especially considering that the category "other" often included local government sources. The breakdown for state and federal funding ([Table 3](#)) reveals that 223 groups, or 47% of those reporting, received funding from either federal sources, state sources, or both. Moreover, for those programs that received federal or state funding, those sources accounted for a sizable portion of total annual program budget. For the 59 groups who got federal but not state funding, federal funding made up, on average, 77% of the total annual budget. For those who got state funding but not federal, the average proportion from state-funding was 72%; and for those who received both federal and state, the average proportions from each source were 45% and 34%, respectively.

Table 1. Annual Budget

Annual Budget (\$)	Number (%) of Programs
0	68 (14%)
1-1,000	124 (26%)
1,001-10,000	114 (24%)
10,001-50,000	102 (21%)
over 50,000	68 (14%)

(Based on responses from 476 programs.)

Table 2. Number of Programs That Receive Funding From Each Source

Source	Number (%) Receiving Funding
Other	218 (43%)
State	164 (32%)
Foundation	129 (25%)
Federal	127 (25%)
Dues	121 (24%)
Corporate	83 (16%)

(Based on responses from 508 programs. *Note:* Many programs reported receiving funding from more than one source.)

Table 3. Federal and State Funding Breakdown

Funding Source	Number of Programs Receiving Funding
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Federal but not State	59
State but not Federal	96
Both Federal and State	68

(Based on responses from 476 programs. 223 programs indicated receipt of funding from either federal, state, or both.)

Some specifically named sources of federal funding were:

- EPA grants via Clean Water Act sections 314, 319, 320, 106, and 205j
- USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
- Sea Grant
- EPA Environmental Education grants
- National Estuarine Research Reserves
- National Park Service

Foundations and dues were each mentioned as funding sources by about ¼ of the respondents. Programs receiving money from either of these two sources relied on that source for about ½ of their annual budget, on average.

Corporate funding came in at the bottom of the list - only 16% of programs received any funding from this source, and those 16% reported that, on average, only 34% of their annual budget was covered by corporate contributions.

Funding Source Diversity

Nearly half the groups (45%) indicated that 100% of their annual budget came from just one of the six funding source categories listed, and only 23% reported getting funding from more than two categories ([Chart 1](#)). The actual amount of funding diversity among volunteer monitoring groups is undoubtedly greater than these figures suggest, since more than one funding source may sometimes be included in a single category. Nevertheless, the results do indicate that many volunteer monitoring groups benefit from increasing the diversity of their funding base.

Diversity of Funding Sources

Number of Sources**Percentage of Programs**

1	45%
2	32%
3	14%
4	4%
5	3%
6	2%

Number of different source categories from which funding is received

Eleanor Ely is the editor of The Volunteer Monitor.



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A Corporate Funder's Point of View

by Kathy Blackburn, Public Affairs Manager

Mervyn's Corporate Giving Program

(Editor's note: Environmental projects are currently not a priority for Mervyn's. However, the author's comments are useful to anyone seeking corporate funding.)

Through its community giving program, Mervyn's - like all Dayton Hudson companies - annually returns 5 percent of its taxable profits to the communities it serves. One of our guiding principles is that we have an obligation to our stockholders to give away money in as strategic a way as we operate our business. So our community giving program must meet the long-term business needs of the company as well as the needs of the community.

Meeting both community and business needs means that we give in communities where we have stores. The closer the program is to one of our stores, and the more it serves the people who shop and work in our stores, the better.

We use our giving program as part of our public relations strategy. The program gives us a competitive edge by maintaining customer loyalty and building our reputation in the community. So in deciding what projects to fund, we ask, Who's going to know about this program? How can we get our employees involved? How will Mervyn's be acknowledged? Can Mervyn's publicize the program?

When you approach a company to ask for money, your proposal will be stronger if you include strategies for recognizing the company's contributions. Think about how the project can help give the company visibility as well as meet the community's needs.



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Finding and Keeping Corporate Sponsors

by Craig Heacock

Corporations are a relatively untapped, yet important, funding source for volunteer monitoring programs. Most major corporations fund community projects, and environmental education has proven to be a popular choice for corporate giving. Moreover, corporate gifts are generally unrestricted compared to government or foundation grants, which are often specifically linked to a workshop or equipment purchase.

We at Project del Rio count on donations from some 70 corporate sponsors to cover roughly half of our budget. Our river monitoring project, based on the GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network) model, spans 1,800 miles of the Rio Grande, from Taos, New Mexico, Brownsville/Matamoros on the Gulf of Mexico, giving us a massive region in which to target corporations, but also a dizzying array of possible funding sources. In Project del Rio's three years of existence, we have learned some important lessons about finding - and keeping - corporate sponsors.

An Investment, Not a Donation

We try to recruit corporations that have a stake in the communities in our project area. Corporate leaders want to see their donations at work in the community, and respond favorably to our requests when we can point out that our work benefits the people who work for and support the corporation. In approaching potential sponsors, we emphasize that their donation is really an investment - an investment in the community and its future, and an investment in the company's image and public relations.

Making Your Case

Before you approach potential corporate sponsors, you need to have a thorough vision of your project - not only in your mind, but also on paper. Prepare an easy-to-read written document, with bulleted main points and highlighted objectives, that explains your goals, specific work plans for reaching those goals, and precise monetary needs. Business people expect their clients and peers to be well organized and thoughtful in their plans and presentations.

The written presentation should emphasize the program's "selling points." For example, at Project del Rio we stress the following:

- The students are involved in a "real world" application of science that has positive implications both for the community and for their own educational and civic future.
- U.S. and Mexico students work cooperatively on the project, building cross-cultural understanding.
- For relatively little money, a corporation can have a major impact on the program - for example, by sponsoring a school or a large workshop.

Contacting Sponsors

New monitoring groups often discover that finding the first corporate donors is the hardest task. Recruiting new sponsors becomes much easier once well-known businesses are already on board. If you can link the new project to an established, respected project, corporate sponsors may be more willing to take the first plunge. For example, associating our new project with the well-known and successful GREEN Rouge River Project in Michigan helped us to convince General Motors to sign on as our original sponsor

As frustrated telemarketers and neophyte fundraisers know, "cold calls" are an extremely difficult way to make connections. Therefore, we always try to use our current sponsors to help find and recruit new corporations. Lisa LaRocque, Project del Rio Director, points out that "corporations get many requests for funding. They're more likely to listen to a request from a peer than from another solicitor."

A little name-dropping never hurts. For example, a letter can start out, "Joe Smith, one of our project's sponsors, suggested that I write to tell you about our project." Include a "cc: Joe Smith, CEO, Company X" at the bottom of the letter.

Often corporate decision makers are hidden behind a maze of secretaries and closed doors. Industry and trade associations meetings offer a prime opportunity for current supporters to avoid such barriers and network directly with potential new sponsors.

Maintaining Support

The key to maintaining corporate support is to keep corporate sponsors closely informed of how their money is being spent to help the community, and appropriately acknowledge their support. At Project del Rio we try to link sponsors with specific schools or projects, so the company can tangibly see the fruits of their contribution. Sponsors might be invited to a monitoring day with "their" school or asked to join a specific advisory committee.

Publicity is one of the major benefits that a monitoring project can offer to sponsors. Effective

approaches used at Project del Rio include mentioning sponsors in interim and annual reports, publicizing a corporation as the major sponsor of a workshop, having the company name mentioned in newspaper articles, and producing T-shirts with sponsors' names on them.

We offer sponsors a four-tiered system in which the amount of public and private acknowledgement a corporation receives is tied to its level of giving (see [figure](#)). We include a copy of this chart in our funding requests to help sponsors choose their level of investment. The higher-level donations usually come either from very large corporations or from company-associated foundations.

We have found that keeping up with our corporate sponsors is a huge task, so large that we recently decided to hire a new fulltime staff member to handle public relations. The job involves promoting Project del Rio not only from the project's perspective but also from the sponsors' perspective - that is, making sure sponsors are acknowledged in articles, press releases, and reports. Communicating with sponsors - thanking them, updating them on program activities and progress, sending them special invitations to events - is another big part of the job. Finally, the public relations staffperson needs to assist in the sponsors' own publicity efforts by providing their public relations departments with photographs or materials for presentations, arranging special promotional activities, and so on.

Staying Objective

We are sometimes asked whether Project del Rio's reliance on corporate sponsors affects our agenda or inhibits our actions. LaRocque says, "I don't feel we've had to compromise. We might not have the support we do if we took an aggressive approach to advocacy. But we look at advocacy as conflict resolution."

Corporate sponsors expect, and rightfully so, that the data generated by a project such as ours will be used in an objective and scientifically valid way. "We are not interested in finger-pointing," says LaRocque, noting that in any case industry contributes only about 30 percent of the pollution to the rivers monitored by Project del Rio; the rest comes from nonpoint sources (polluted runoff).

Corporate fundraising, like most types of fundraising, can be a tedious and frustrating task, but building on already-established relationships and carefully maintaining these ties can make it much less painful. And take heart - the inherent value of our mission is an invaluable ally in raising needed funds.

***Craig Heacock** is the U.S. Coordinator for Project del Rio, 1345 Camino de los Lopez, Suite B, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 505/471-7788.*

***Project del Rio** involves students from about 15 schools in New Mexico, 20 in Texas, and 20 in Mexico, working together to monitor water quality on the Rio Grande.*

Levels of Sponsorship Offered by Project del Rio

	Watershed sponsor \$10,000 +	Regional sponsor \$4,000 - \$10,000	Local sponsor \$2,000 - \$4,000	Friend \$500 - \$2,000
Thank-you letter	•	•	•	•
Invitation to special events	•	•	•	
Certificate of appreciation	•	•		
Invitation to serve on board or special committees	•			
Mention in all regional press releases	•	•	•	
Highlight in interim report	•	•		
Mention in all watershed press releases	•			
Highlight in annual report	•			



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Wanted: Good Ideas on Data Presentation

The Massachusetts Water Watch partnership is developing a workshop and handbook on effective data presentation for volunteer-generated water quality data. We would like to include all proven methods that are used across the nation. We are particularly interested in data presentations done by the volunteers themselves, and innovative methods that go beyond the written presentation (e.g., roundtable discussions).

Readers who have ideas to share are invited to contact us at the address below, or leave a message on the NPS VolMon electronic bulletin board. We will be happy to share our end product with anyone who is interested.

Please write or call Marie Francoise Walk or Jerry Schoen at Blaisdell House, UMASS, Box 30820, Amherst, MA 01003-0820; 413/545-2842.



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About the Volunteer Monitor

The Volunteer Monitor newsletter facilitates the exchange of ideas, monitoring methods, and practical advice among volunteer environmental monitoring groups across the nation.

Subscribing

Currently *The Volunteer Monitor* is published twice yearly. Subscriptions are free. To be added to the mailing list, write to the address below. Your subscription will start with the next issue.

Reprinting articles

Readers are encouraged to reprint material from *The Volunteer Monitor*. But please: Call first to notify the editor of your intentions, and send a copy of your final publication to the address below.

Participating

The newsletter is your tool for information sharing. Let us know what topics you would like to learn more about, and what information you have to share.

Rotating co-editors

The Volunteer Monitor has a permanent editor and volunteer editorial board. In addition, a different monitoring group serves as co-editor for each issue. This unique structure ensures stability while allowing a variety of viewpoints to be represented.

Address all correspondence to: Eleanor Ely, editor, 1318 Masonic Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94117; telephone 415/255-8049.



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Back Issues

The following back issues are available:

- Fall 1991 - special topic: Biological Monitoring. (Original out of print, but photocopies available.)
- Spring 1992 - special topic: Monitoring for Advocacy.
- Fall 1992 - special topic: Building Credibility.
- Spring 1993 - special topic: School-Based Monitoring.

To obtain back issues, or additional copies of this issue, send a self-addressed stamped envelope, 9 x 12 or larger, to *The Volunteer Monitor*, 1318 Masonic Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117. First-class postage is 75¢ for one issue, \$1.21 for two, and \$1.44 for three. For \$2.90, you can get up to 15 copies. For larger orders, please call for shipping charges.



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To the Editor

The Fall 1992 issue of *The Volunteer Monitor*, on page 7, contains a brief article on the thermometer calibration method used by the Chesapeake Bay Citizen Monitoring Program. In connection with the Watershed Watch program in Walnut Creek, California, we have developed an approach for calibrating thermometers which we believe is both easier and quicker.

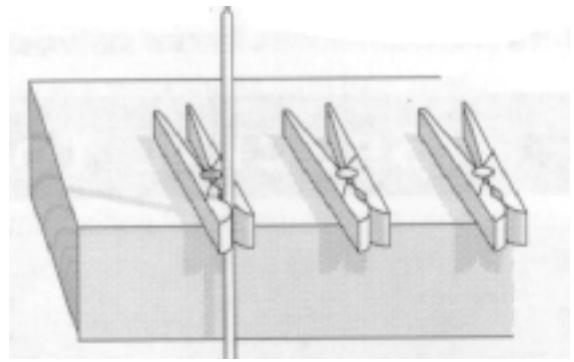
We prepare three water baths, at approximately 10°C, 20°C, and 30°C, in 5-gallon plastic buckets. This relatively large volume of water (compared to the 1-quart jars recommended in the earlier article) effectively precludes water temperature changes during readings and eliminates any need for "equilibration." Both during the melting of the ice to prepare the 10°C bath and during the subsequent temperature readings, the water is stirred frequently to assure a uniform temperature.

To support the thermometers during the calibration procedure, we built a rack from a 15-inch piece of 2 × 6 lumber and 9 spring-type wooden clothespins. The clothespins extend horizontally over the edge of the 2 × 6 to hold the thermometers vertically. To make the rack, we drilled a series of 5/32-in. holes about 1-1/4 in. apart along one edge of the 2 × 6 and attached the clothespins with 10-penny nails through the clothespin spring and the drilled holes. With this rack, it is easy to transfer eight field thermometers and one ASTM 63C precision thermometer from one bath to the next.

Our procedure is to set the rack on one bucket and clip on the thermometers, which have been marked with identifying numbers on tape in indelible ink. After about a minute, all nine thermometers are read in sequence. The readings are repeated two more times, at approximately one-minute intervals. The rack and thermometers are then moved to the next bath, and the triplicate reading procedure is repeated. (A similar triplicate reading process, but with 15-second intervals between readings, is used for individual temperature measurements in the field. We found that the field thermometers generally reach their final readings within 15 seconds.)

This procedure gives individual calibrations that may be used to correct the readings to standard values, if desired. However, field experience showed that in our case - with flows ranging from 0.2 to 5 cubic feet per second, and hot summer temperatures - sample variability, as determined from duplicate samples, significantly exceeded the typical 0.2-0.3°C errors found in the thermometers.

Ralph H. Cross, III
consulting engineer
2365 Dapplegray Lane
Walnut Creek, CA 94596





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From the Editor

Readers who don't study the fine print on this page may not be aware that each issue of *The Volunteer Monitor* has a different co-editor - a volunteer monitoring group that takes special responsibility for helping to plan and shape that particular issue.

It is to the rotating co-editors' credit that their role has never been blaringly obvious. All of the newsletter's co-editing groups have taken pains to stay in the background, working to enhance the overall usefulness of the issue rather than promoting their own group or agenda. Yet their work - from developing the theme and scope of the issue, to suggesting specific article topics and writers, to writing and reviewing articles - enriches the issue in countless ways.

It's time for the co-editors to get more credit for their work. Let me start by thanking the staff of Maryland Save Our Streams for their invaluable guidance with this issue. They join the ranks of previous co-editors with whom the editorial board and I have had the privilege of working: GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network), [Spring 1993](#); Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership, Fall 1992; Adopt-A-Stream Foundation in Washington State, Spring 1992; and Rhode Island's Salt Pond Watchers and River Rescue (jointly), Fall 1991.

For [Spring 1994](#), the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council in Michigan will be co-editing an "overview" issue that will take a look at where the volunteer monitoring movement is now, where it's been, and where it's going.



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Editorial Board: George Crozier (Baywatch Program, Alabama), Kathleen Ellett (Chesapeake Bay Citizen Monitoring Program, Maryland), Mike Herz (San Francisco BayKeeper, California), Meg Kerr (River Rescue, Rhode Island), Virginia Lee (Rhode Island Salt Pond Watchers), Abby Markowitz (Maryland Save Our Streams), Ken Pritchard (Adopt-a-Beach, Washington), Jeff Schloss (New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring Program), Jerry Schoen (Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership)

Co-editing group for this issue: Maryland Save Our Streams

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EPA Electronic Bulletin Board Update

Back issues of *The Volunteer Monitor* are now available electronically via the U.S. EPA's Nonpoint Source Bulletin Board System (NPS BBS). As readers of our Spring 1993 issue may remember, the NPS BBS contains a Volunteer Monitoring Special Interest Group (SIG) forum that enables users to exchange messages, read bulletins on volunteer monitoring issues, and dip into databases such as a volunteer monitoring bibliography. Individual articles from *The Volunteer Monitor* are located in file area 3 and are listed by file name, title, author, and issue.

In another new development, the NPS BBS is now accessible through Internet. Through FedWorld, a project set up by the National Technical Information Service, Internet users are able to connect up with more than 100 federal computer bulletin boards. To reach the FedWorld gateway from Internet, enter TELNET FEDWORLD.GOV from your Internet prompt. The IP address for FedWorld is 192.239.92.201. To reach the NPS BBS from FedWorld, select the Gateway option from the main menu. After entering the Gateway, type "D 79" to reach the NPS BBS.

Currently, NPS BBS message functions, bulletins, databases, and SIGs are available through this link. File transfer capabilities and Internet E-mail are still under development.

If you have questions about the Internet connection, call FedWorld's voice help line at 703/487-4608 or the NPS BBS's Elaine Bloom at 202/260-3665. A user's manual for the NPS BBS is available from USEPA, AWPD (4503F), NPS Information Exchange, 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460.



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New Estuary Monitoring Manual

EPA is about to release the second in its series of methods manuals for volunteer monitors. *Volunteer Estuary Monitoring: A Methods Manual* was prepared for EPA's Oceans and Coastal Protection Division under cooperative agreement with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

The new manual outlines the problems facing our nation's estuaries, discusses training and quality assurance considerations, and provides step-by-step instructions on monitoring dissolved oxygen, nutrients, phytoplankton, submerged aquatic vegetation, and bacteria. It also covers monitoring marine debris and collecting shellfish for analysis.

The manual should be available early next year and will be free of charge. To order, contact Joe Hall, USEPA, OCPD (4504F), 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460; 202/260-9082.

(Note: The first manual in the series, *Volunteer Lake Monitoring: A Methods Manual*, is still available. To order, write or call Alice Mayo, USEPA, Assessment and Watershed Protection Division (4503F), 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460; 202/260-7018.)



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Fourth National Volunteer Monitoring Conference

The fourth national volunteer monitoring conference is coming to Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, on April 9-14, 1994. The conference will focus on "putting volunteer data to use" and will include discussion panels, workshops, and field trips.

Preliminary announcement flyers were sent out in October to everyone on *The Volunteer Monitor* mailing list. If you did not receive an announcement, please write to Volunteer Monitoring Conference/Pacific Agenda, P.O. Box 10142, Portland, OR 97210, or call 503/225-9916 to be put on a mailing list to receive the conference brochure. Brochures will be mailed out in January 1994.

Time has been set aside on the agenda for short, interactive presentations by conference participants. Some examples of possible presentation topics are: how to make your own monitoring equipment; classroom activities; performance, song, or storytelling; major findings of a long-term monitoring project; tips on motivating and rewarding volunteers; or innovative restoration techniques. Anyone interested in applying for interactive presentation space should immediately write or call CITE, 2405 NE 21 Ave., Portland, OR 97212; 503/282-2627 to obtain an application form and guidelines.

Conference registration will be \$40 (not including field trips). Hotel rates will range from \$49 to \$67 per night for singlerooms, \$54 to \$82 for doubles.

Co-sponsors of the conference include the U.S. EPA, CITE Creative Information (Portland), the (Portland) Urban Streams Council, City of Portland Environmental Services, Portland State University Urban Studies, Clackamas County Utilities, Unified Sewerage Agency (Hillsboro, OR), and Portland General Electric.



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Alabama Forms Association

This information is no longer available.



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Coalition to Restore Urban Waters

Urban rivers - polluted, trashed, channelized, and in some cases buried and all but forgotten - have a new ally. The Coalition to Restore Urban Waterways (CRUW) was launched in February of 1993 by 30 people representing national conservation groups, urban stream coalitions, federal agencies, and minority group coalitions.

Already CRUW has sponsored a national conference, "Friends of Trashed Rivers: Restoring Urban Waterways," which was held in September in San Francisco and attracted 320 participants representing grassroots and community organizers as well as agencies. CRUW's lead organization, Izaak Walton League's Save Our Streams program, is currently seeking funding to provide technical assistance for community restoration and grassroots organizing through CRUW's regional offices. The coalition's Political Action Committee (CRUW-PAC) will function separately from the Izaak Walton League program to actively pursue CRUW's legislative agenda, including an effort to amend the Clean Water Act to require states to establish citizen water quality and watershed monitoring programs.

For more information about CRUW, and a listing of CRUW's regional offices, contact Karen Firehock, IWLA SOS, 1401 Wilson Blvd., Level B, Arlington, VA 22209; 703/528-1818. For information about CRUW-PAC, contact Ann L. Riley, California Natural Resources Foundation, 1250 Addison St., #107, Berkeley, CA 94702.



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Environmental Education Grants

The Environmental Education Grants program, established in 1990 and administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), awards grants annually to support environmental education projects. Any local or tribal education agency, college or university, state educational or environmental agency, nonprofit organization, or noncommercial educational broadcasting entity is eligible for these grants.

The program is highly competitive. Grants are awarded through both EPA headquarters (in Washington, DC) and EPA regional offices. The majority are for under \$5,000.

The application deadline for fiscal year 1994 has passed. The deadline for fiscal year 1995 has not been announced, but will probably be in fall 1994. The best way to ensure receiving the solicitation notice for 1995 is to mail a request, including your name, organization, address, and phone number, to:

Environmental Education Grants - 1995
U.S. EPA (A-107)
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460



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Grantwriting Attitude

The attitude you bring to filling out a grant application comes through loud and clear to the funder who evaluates hundreds of applications each year. If you believe in what you are doing, this will shine through in your application.

Be honest in discussing both your ends and your means. Remember that you are not engineering a scam or trying to trick someone into giving you money. If you want funds for a community tree planting, don't try to convince potential funders that your project will solve all the world's problems tomorrow. Tree plantings are important in and of themselves.

There is nothing more eloquent than someone simply describing a problem in their community that is important to them and the steps they would like to take toward resolving that problem. Leave the hyperbole behind. Flowery writing will never compensate for a poorly conceived activity - but good projects hidden under piles of distracting verbiage often end up in the discard bin.

Obtaining grants is competitive, and many excellent proposals do not get funded. Show funders why they should support your project over the others.

- Rick Leader
Project Coordinator
Chesapeake Bay Trust



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Grantwriting for Teachers

by **Cindy Bullock and Robert Williams**

Who says teachers can't write grant proposals? More often than not, it's the teachers themselves. The standard excuses - "I'm too busy," "I don't know where to find information," "I'm a poor writer," "My school doesn't encourage it" - are readily used and provide a nice cushion against the fear of failure.

Training for teachers who join the Rivers Curriculum Project always includes a session on grantwriting. These teachers are discovering that writing a grant proposal is not all that complicated, and many have been quite successful. For example: Melinda Fagan, a science teacher at Barry High School in Illinois, received a \$12,000 grant from GTE Telephone Operations to fund several advanced science projects, one of which was the Rivers Project. And a four-teacher interdisciplinary team from Pecatonica High School in Illinois was awarded \$3,000 from Laidlaw Waste Systems, Inc. (a local landfill company) to purchase water testing equipment, video equipment, and cameras, and to send students to the annual Rivers Project Student Congress. You too can have a success story!

Target Local Funding Sources First

Compile a "wish list" of the items and money you need for your project, then start looking for funding sources. Your first attempt should target local sources; national grants are very competitive and usually require prior successes. Survey your community for such potential sources as:

- business headquarters or major divisions of companies
- chain stores such as Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart, etc.
- banks or savings and loans
- philanthropic families
- family foundations
- companies that are involved with water quality
- service clubs (Rotary Club, Kiwanis, etc.)

Don't overlook the public library. Check the reference section for books that list local foundations and funding sources.

Establishing a partnership with a local agency or business pays off doubly. The direct benefit is obvious - the additional financial and in-kind support that the partner brings to the project. The added bonus is that grantors tend to look favorably upon a project that includes a partnership already in place.

Ready to Write

The same general principles apply to writing a grant proposal for a school project as for any other project (see [Proposal Writing Made Simple\(r\)](#) for pointers). Here are a few tips that we stress for teachers in Rivers Project training workshops:

- Be sure to focus on what the students are doing or will do, not on what you as a teacher are doing. The students are the key ingredient in a successful program.
- If your project is already established, include your history and successes. Specifically brag about the students' work.
- Include a letter of support from your school principal or district superintendent.
- Have someone else read and critique your proposal. You want a critical, not a sympathetic, reader. If the reader finds flaws, so will the funding source.

Carla Derrick, a library media specialist for Clark County R-1 Schools in Missouri, has been very successful in obtaining grants. Her advice for teachers who are writing proposals is to stress some "hot topics" in the field of education - for example, community-school cooperation, "outcome-based education," hands-on learning experiences, or the use of innovative technology (such as computers, videos, or water monitoring equipment).

Before submitting a full-fledged proposal, do some homework to identify your best prospects. In a phone call or a one-page letter, briefly describe your idea and ask whether the funder has any interest in such a project.

When you are ready to send in the final proposal, it's better to apply for the funds in the name of the school rather than in your own name, for two reasons. First, many foundations are not allowed to give a grant to an individual, but they can give to a school or school district. Second, if you receive a grant in your own name, it will be counted as personal income by the IRS and you will be liable for income tax.

Building on Success

Bill Beckman, a science teacher at East Peoria High School in Illinois, is a prime example of a teacher starting small and going on to greater successes. Before joining the Rivers Project, Beckman had written a few proposals for small grants - but received only rejections, a discouraging experience. Then in fall 1990, after going through Rivers Project training, Beckman applied for several grants and succeeded in obtaining \$200 from the Caterpillar Foundation and \$100 from Pekin Energy Company (a company that

produces ethanol fuel).

Beckman credits the skills and confidence he gained in the training session with bringing about this change in fortune. "I was still getting some rejections, too," he notes, "mostly because I was sending proposals to the wrong funders." This experience pointed up the importance of matching a proposal to the goals of the funder.

Three hundred dollars doesn't seem like much, but it was a beginning. The following year, Beckman co-wrote a successful application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for \$5,000 in 319 (Nonpoint Source Program) funding to conduct a nonpoint source pollution study with the students. That same year, the project received a \$1,000 Golden Rule Award from J.C. Penney and \$4,200 worth of donated laboratory equipment from IBM.

Based on these successes, Beckman and his colleagues applied for and received two grants in 1993 - \$12,000 from GTE and \$47,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE funding was an Energy Conservation Education matching grant that paid for employing students (as summer interns) to conduct energy audits at 12 schools, with the assistance of hired professional engineers.

Now the energy audits are completed, and the 12 schools are eligible for up to \$85,000 each from the DOE to make improvements in energy efficiency. Beckman and his colleagues are currently writing proposals for that funding. With their track record, they are understandably optimistic about their chances for success.

Beckman is an outstanding example, but remember that he started with a \$100 grant and a \$200 grant. So start small, but start, and keep trying. Persistence is the most important factor in obtaining a grant.

Cindy Bullock is Project Coordinator and Robert Williams is Project Advisor for the Rivers Curriculum Project, Southern Illinois University, Box 2222, Edwardsville, IL 62026; 618/ 692-3788.

The Rivers Curriculum Project is an interdisciplinary high school program combining science, social studies, and language arts in the study of a local river. Six curriculum units have been field-tested and are due to be published in 1994.



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Rivers Curriculum Project Summer Training Session

The Rivers Curriculum Project is recruiting high school teachers to field-test its interdisciplinary rivers curriculum. The training session will be held August 8-12, 1994, in Edwardsville, Illinois. Preference will be given to applicants who can attend as part of an interdisciplinary team (e.g., a science teacher and a social studies teacher). For more information, contact Dr. Robert Williams at the address listed in [Grantwriting for Teachers](#).



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Once You Find Them, Never Let Them Go

by Elizabeth Toler

If you have ever made a charitable contribution, chances are your gift triggered an onslaught of follow-up requests from that same charity. Why? Because a person who has donated once is considered a better prospect for continuing support than a new and untested target. So a good fundraising program puts as much effort into holding onto "old" donors as it does into getting new donors. The strategy is simple - just remember that Accountability, Recognition, and Thanks are the key elements in the "ART" of keeping your supporters.

Accountability

Make note of any special terms accompanying a gift or grant (such as specific procedures and deadlines for reporting), and make certain that everyone involved in the project is aware of these responsibilities. Submitting reports in a timely fashion demonstrates your accountability and keeps donors interested in your project. Even if reports are not required, it's a good idea to send at least a brief update.

Schedule meetings with major donors to review your objectives and accomplishments and discuss new ideas. If you need to make changes in the schedule or budget outlined in your original proposal, be sure to communicate this to funders.

Recognition

Getting good publicity for your monitoring project lets donors know that their funds are being put to use and provides recognition for their support. (However, some donors may prefer that their contributions not be publicized, so ask permission before making public announcements.)

Volunteer monitoring projects offer excellent opportunities for inviting donors to see your group in action. Plan special field trips for donors to coincide with monitoring activities, so donors can meet volunteers. Invite donors to special events - not just fundraisers, but also events like picnics, annual award dinners, or Earth Day outings - and give them special recognition, just as you do your volunteers.

Thanks

Immediately upon hearing that your organization has received a grant or donation, send a note or make a phone call to express your appreciation. And don't forget to also thank those who helped contact the donor or prepare the proposal, and those who sent letters of support.



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Proposal Writing Made Simple(r)

by Nancy Light

What comes to mind when you think of writing a proposal to gain funding for your project? It takes too much time? It's too intimidating? It requires a lot of effort and you're sure foundations couldn't possibly be interested in your program?

Proposal writing can be all of these things, but it doesn't need to be - nor should it be. If you know your territory and feel strongly about your program, grantwriting can be a successful part of the financial base for any volunteer monitoring organization.

Beware, though, the temptation to believe that once you've written a grant proposal, all of your financial troubles will be solved. Foundations can be a significant source of money for specific projects, but they rarely provide ongoing support. Keep this in mind as you think through your fundraising plans for the next few years.

1. Know whom you're writing for. Identify the foundations that are most likely to have an interest in your project. Don't limit yourself to foundations with a stated interest in the environment. Be creative! For instance, does your project involve working with students or schools? Does the monitoring work with which you're involved address potential threats to human health? Does it involve the community by bringing people together to learn about or address water quality problems? If so, look at foundations with an interest in education, health or community outreach. Show how a monitoring program fits into this larger framework.

If proposal guidelines are available, request them from the foundation and follow them to the letter. Any deviation from these guidelines may lead to automatic rejection of your request.

2. Put yourself in the position of the grantmaker. Imagine what would convince you to give someone \$5,000 for a monitoring project. "It's a worthy project" doesn't cut it - there are many worthy causes. By knowing your audience, you will be able to tailor your request to the foundation's specific interests. Think of what the foundation needs to know about your project that will lend it immediacy, importance, and uniqueness.

3. Define your project precisely and concisely. Grantmakers want to know exactly what it is you're requesting money for. This sounds ridiculously basic, but it is key that you describe your program in one or two succinct sentences. If you're vague and unsure, count on your reader being confused; your proposal will be relegated to the "no thanks" pile.

People who review grant proposals sometimes must read hundreds of requests. Don't make them search through endless paragraphs to find the essence of your project. Rather, start with something like: "Recent widespread algal blooms indicate the presence of increased phosphorus levels in the Babbling Brook. We are asking the Generous Foundation for \$5,000 to purchase the monitoring equipment we need to carry out tests which will determine whether the amount of phosphorus has risen and to make recommendations as to how to stem this increase."

4. Provide all the basic information needed for a grantmaker to understand your organization.

Don't forget to state the name of your organization, how long you've been operating (if applicable), and whether your group has nonprofit 501(c)(3) status. (If you don't have nonprofit status, state the organization whose tax-exempt status you will be using, a so-called "pass through" organization.)

Also include any of your significant accomplishments. Here is where you can (and should!) brag about yourself. For instance, in a recent successful proposal, the Connecticut River Watch Program included this piece of information: "Two of our major accomplishments over the last year include increasing our volunteer support by 242% and expanding the number of sites we monitor by 33% to a total of 104." An increase in your number of volunteers is especially persuasive because foundations want to see a solid base of community support for projects.

5. State as clearly as possible the nature of the problem you are addressing and why it is a problem.

An example: "There have been three major fish kills along the Polluted River in the last year and we intend to discover why." Use this section of the proposal to educate your reader. Why are fish kills a problem?

The problems addressed by your proposal needn't be limited strictly to monitoring. Instead, a "problem" might be the need to provide enriching educational and practical experiences for students - or the need to increase public awareness of the connection between land use and water quality, or between inadequate sewage treatment facilities and the incidence of illness among local residents.

Unless you know your readers very well, never assume that they have a clear understanding of the problem you are addressing. Though well-informed, foundation personnel must review an incredible amount of material from a variety of sources. Make your proposal stand out by being crystal clear.

6. Tell the funder how you're going to fix this problem. In other words, what is the method you will employ to address the problem? This is a crucial section of your proposal, so again, think like a grantmaker and answer the questions grantmakers would want to know. Show them that you have a well-crafted (and, if appropriate, creative) plan to alleviate the problem. For example: "We will perform total

phosphorus tests at three points along the river three times during the year."



RIVER WATCH NETWORK

Connecticut River Watch Program Coordinator Marie Levesque Caduto and River Watch Network New England Coordinator Geoff Dates demonstrate macroinvertebrate collection.

Now comes the detail: Tell them why you chose this sampling method, what it will show you, how you will train volunteers to perform it, whether other labs will be running blind samples to check your technique, how your data will be catalogued and presented, and what will be done with your data once you have it all compiled. This last point is especially important. One of the reasons foundations give for rejecting monitoring programs' proposals is that no provision has been made for what will be done with the data once they are collected. Be sure you make clear that collecting water quality data is not an end in itself.

When you've finished demonstrating how you're going to fix the problem, it's nice to close this section with a sentence or two stating why your organization is ideal to address the problem. Convince the grantmaker that no one else could do this project as well as your organization. What are your strengths? Look at your group's community support, past successes, base of volunteers, scientific expertise, and uniqueness.

7. State how you will evaluate your project. Grantmakers want to know whether their money is used appropriately. Therefore you must present a method by which they can judge the success of your project. The method of evaluation will vary from project to project. Sometimes it will be quantitative (number of sites monitored, number of volunteers recruited, number of river miles covered); other times it will be qualitative, such as raising community awareness of water pollution issues.

Qualitative evaluation can be tricky. "Raised community awareness" might be measured by the number of newspaper articles that mention your project or the amount of television coverage your project receives. Another qualitative measurement of success would be any changes that are made as a result of your project (for example, changes in laws or regulations, or in the way science is taught at school).

This section should also specify how long it will take before it can be determined whether your project has succeeded.

8. Finally, how much will it cost? Try to be as specific as possible, providing the funder with a line-item budget if you can. Include the cost of equipment, travel, printing and copying, postage, telephone, and materials. If the project is being supported by other sources, include that information.

Don't forget to include in-kind support from volunteers both as revenue (the value of the time they put in) and as an expense (what you would have had to spend to obtain these services). Including in-kind contributions of volunteer time works to your benefit by showing the widespread support your project enjoys as well as the true cost of your project (if it weren't for volunteers, it's likely your project would be prohibitively expensive, as regulatory agencies have discovered).

Writing proposals need not be painful or intimidating. If you combine these guidelines with your commitment and passion for volunteer monitoring, you can establish rewarding relationships with grantmaking foundations. Good luck!

Nancy Light is Development Director for River Watch Network, 153 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602; 802/223-3840.

River Watch Network (RWN) is a national, nonprofit organization that works with community groups to develop river monitoring and protection programs. RWN offers organizational and technical assistance to conservation organizations, high school and college teachers and students, and citizen volunteers. RWN now has a corps of 6,000 volunteers nationwide working to restore and protect their rivers.



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Resources for Grantseekers

The Foundation Center

The Foundation Center, an independent national organization established by foundations, produces numerous publications on foundations and fundraising and also maintains library collections that are free to the public. Foundation Center collections include four comprehensive "reference collections," located in New York, Washington (DC), Cleveland, and San Francisco, and more than 180 smaller "cooperating collections" throughout the country.

The publications listed below are generally available at Foundation Center collections. To locate the collection nearest you, or to order a Foundation Center publication, call 1-800-424-9836.

Foundation Center Directories

The Foundation Directory. Annual. \$150. Data on over 6,300 major foundations.

National Directory of Corporate Giving. 1992. \$195. Includes over 2,000 corporate funders.

The National Guide to Giving for the Environment and Animal Welfare. 1992. \$75. Lists over 1,100 foundations and corporate giving programs that award grants to environment-related projects and organizations.

Foundation Center How-to Guides

Foundation Fundamentals. 4th edition. 1991. \$19.95. An introduction to the basic procedures of funding research.

The Foundation Center's Guide to Proposal Writing. 1993. \$29.95. In-depth guidance for pre-proposal planning, writing the grant proposal, and follow-up.

The Foundation Center's User-Friendly Guide: A Grantseeker's Guide to Resources. 2nd. edition. 1992. \$12.95. For novice grantseekers.

Other Directories

Environmental Grantmaking Foundations 1992. **\$40.** Profiles 250 environmental grantmakers. Published by Environmental Data Research Institute, 797 Elmwood Ave., Rochester, NY 14620; 1-800-724-1857.

Environmental Grantmakers Association Directory. **4th edition. 1992.** Lists 138 private, public, community, and corporate foundations and grantmakers. Published by Environmental Grantmakers Association, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Ste. 3450, New York, NY 10104; 212-373-4260. Also available on EcoNet.

Periodicals

Whole Nonprofit Catalog. Free. The Grantsmanship Center, P.O. Box 17220, Los Angeles, CA 90017; 213-482-9863.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy. Biweekly. \$67.50/year; \$36/6 months. 1255 23rd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037; 1-800-842-7817.

Grants for Training

The **Environmental Support Center** provides grants to subsidize training in areas such as fundraising, financial management, board development, and public relations. State, local, and regional groups working on environmental issues are eligible. For application forms and information, contact the Environmental Support Center at 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 340, Washington, DC 20009; 202-328-7813.



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Targeting the Right Foundation

by Elizabeth Toler

It's been estimated that more than 90 percent of grant proposals fail - often because they are not compatible with the funding priorities of the foundations to which they are submitted. Remember that foundations achieve their missions through the grants they make. The essence of grantseeking is to target your proposal to funders who are interested in making grants to organizations like yours, to programs like yours, in the geographic area you serve, and for the dollar amount you seek.

Getting Information

With over 34,000 active foundations in the United States, identifying your best prospects can seem like a daunting task. Fortunately, a wealth of resources is available to help you. One of the best services is the Foundation Center, which produces numerous publications and operates library collections throughout the country (see "[Resources for Grantseekers](#)"). Foundation Center collections include a number of large national directories that index foundations by subject area, geographic focus, and type of support given (operating support, seed money, etc.)

If the scope of your program is local, locally based foundations and corporations are your best bet. Some of these are too small to be included in the national directories. To find them, check for local directories at your library, state or local office of community affairs, or United Way office. Information on less-publicized foundations, especially local family foundations, may be available from trust departments of local banks, which often serve as foundation administrators or contacts. Colleagues in other water monitoring organizations may be willing to share with you their local leads and foundation contacts.

Finding a Match

You'll probably begin your search by turning to one or more of the directories and looking for potential funders who share your concerns about water quality and resource protection. But don't limit your search to the most obvious categories, like environmental improvement or conservation. Take a close look at foundations listed under indices for civic affairs, community development, education, volunteerism, public health, and, if appropriate, children and youth.

Once you've narrowed down your search by subject area, geographic scope, and type of support, move to a more detailed study of each foundation on your prospect list. Carefully reread descriptions in the directories. Order the foundation's annual report and application guidelines. Scrutinize its mission statement, funding priorities, and grantmaking history.

A review of the grants made by a foundation will yield useful clues about its actual interest in a subject area and the dollar range of grants made to your type of program. Look for funding patterns: rural versus urban, professional versus grassroots, operating support versus project support. If you have contacts in organizations that have received that foundation's support, seek their advice and their endorsement for your proposal.

Calling the Potential Grantmaker

When you have a fairly short list of your best prospects, call each one to verify current deadlines and clarify any questions you may have. Be sure to do your homework before you call; you will make a poor impression if you ask a lot of questions that are answered in the foundation's published guidelines. It is appropriate at this time to briefly outline your project and ask whether it is in the ballpark of what the foundation is interested in funding (but it is not appropriate to ask for an estimate of your chances of success).

Writing the Proposal

When you finally sit down to write your proposal, your research into the foundation's mission and interests really pays off. Here is your chance to show where the common ground is between your goals and the grantmaker's. Make a strong case for the relevance of your program to the stated mission, field of support, and priority interests of the foundation.

Elizabeth Toler is assistant director of Virginia Environmental Endowment, P.O. Box 790, Richmond, VA 23206-0790; 804/644-5000.

Virginia Environmental Endowment is a nonprofit grantmaking foundation whose grant programs include water resource management and protection in Virginia and parts of West Virginia and Kentucky.



Note: This information is provided for reference purposes only. Although the information provided here was accurate and current when first created, it is now outdated.

Current Clean Water Act Funding for Volunteer Monitoring

by Alice Mayo

Editor's Note

The Clean Water Act of 1972 (and its amendments) guides most of what the Environmental Protection Agency does to protect the quality of our streams, lakes, estuaries, and wetlands. Although the phrase "volunteer monitoring" never actually appears in the current version of the Act, several of its sections can help fund volunteer monitoring projects.

The three sections of the Clean Water Act that are most widely used today to fund volunteer monitoring are Section 314, the Clean Lakes Program; Section 319, the Nonpoint Source Program; and Section 320, the National Estuary Program. These three sections allow EPA to give grants to state water quality agencies, which in turn may either use the money themselves or pass it through to local and regional governments, nonprofits, academics, and other organizations. It is important to note that the individual EPA regional offices and state agencies that administer the programs vary significantly across the country in the emphasis and support they give to volunteers.

As you will see, certain underlying similarities are evident in these three programs: (1) Highest priority for funding generally goes to projects that generate quality data using accepted techniques and following quality assurance protocols; (2) Applicants must do a certain amount of legwork and research before applying; and (3) In all three programs, the state receiving the grant must provide matching funds (the percentage of the match varies with the program), and the labor of volunteers (hours \times minimum wage) may be considered part of the in-kind match.

Clean Lakes Program

Section 314 establishes a Clean Lakes Program that gives grants to states to encourage lake water quality assessments, restoration of impaired lakes, and post-restoration monitoring. Of these grants, it is the lake water quality assessment grants that are most commonly used to fund volunteer monitoring programs. States submit applications to the 10 EPA regional offices for Clean Lakes grants every year.

According to Frank Lapensee, Chief of EPA's Clean Lakes Program, many states cannot afford to conduct their own extensive lake monitoring programs, and therefore the lion's share of information they have on lake conditions is collected by volunteer programs, many of which are funded through Section 314. The Washington Department of Ecology, for example, uses volunteer data from its Citizen Lake Monitoring Project to report to the public, EPA, and Congress on lake water quality status; to provide data to support changes in state water quality standards; and to assist permit writers and local decision makers. Some states, like Washington, use their lake water quality assessment grants to fund state-managed lake volunteer monitoring programs; others may provide assistance to programs run by universities, local and regional watershed associations, or other not-for-profit organizations.

According to the Act, only "significant, publicly owned" lakes may be assessed using 314 funds. Grants can be used for monitoring a specific lake or its tributaries, conducting watershed surveys, or conducting educational activities related to the lake or program. Volunteer projects must adhere to state guidelines on methods and training, and their data must be of sufficient quality to be used in the state's biennial water quality assessment.

Nonpoint Source Program

Section 319 was designed to help states develop and implement programs to control nonpoint source pollution (i.e., polluted runoff). Under this section, states were directed to undertake a three-phase process: first, to assess their waters to determine which were threatened or impaired by nonpoint sources; second, to develop programs for managing those problem waters; and finally, to implement the management programs. Federal funds to help states with the implementation phase first became available in 1990. States are now continuing with the implementation phase; every year, they submit grant applications to EPA for funding to carry out nonpoint source controls.

Volunteer projects that are most likely to qualify for 319 grants either monitor the effects of nonpoint source control measures or carry out the first step of implementation. For example, as part of an overall watershed implementation project, they may help target where, how, and why nonpoint source pollution is entering a specific problem watershed, so that control measures can be implemented. In Massachusetts, for instance, the North and South Rivers Watershed Association has used 319 and other funds to help identify and correct specific sources of bacterial pollution causing shellfish bed closures. Projects that demonstrate the effectiveness of a new nonpoint source pollution control approach, or that spread the word about such an approach to another problem watershed, may also qualify.



EILEEN GUNN

Buzzards Bay Citizens' Water Quality Monitoring Program volunteers collect samples in West Falmouth Harbor. The program is supported by National Estuary Program funds.

To discover if you are eligible for a 319 grant, get in touch with your state water quality or other lead nonpoint source control agency. It is the state agency, after all, that will be submitting the grant application to EPA. You will need to find out which waters have been identified by the state as impaired or threatened by nonpoint sources, since 319 projects are usually funded only for the highest priority problem waters that are scheduled to receive control measures under the state's management program.

Each state and EPA regional office administering 319 grants has different priorities in determining which projects to fund. Some states and regions have more experience with volunteer monitoring than others, so it may be up to you to convince them of the value of your project. The more specific and scientifically credible your project, the better your chances.

National Estuary Program

Section 320 establishes the National Estuary Program (NEP) to address pollution problems in a limited number of estuaries of "national significance" (currently, 21 estuaries nationwide have been nominated and accepted into the program). In each estuary, a management conference composed of government representatives, academics, citizens, and nonprofit organizations is charged with developing a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the estuary. EPA supports the process of developing the CCMP for five years, and during that time is authorized to award funds for up to 75 percent of the costs of developing the CCMP.

Sound scientific information, public education, and citizen involvement are all key to making these management conferences work. Management conferences often support volunteer monitoring programs because of such programs' effectiveness both in generating important data and in providing opportunities

for meaningful public involvement.

To apply for funding under the NEP, the first requirement is that you must monitor in an estuary that participates in the program. You may either apply to, or be recruited by, the management conference. As with the Nonpoint Source and Clean Lakes programs, priority is usually given to projects that go beyond public involvement and generate useful data. For example, eutrophication data from the Buzzards Bay Citizens' Water Quality Monitoring Program is being used to help establish priorities for management action and expenditure of implementation funds for Buzzards Bay.

Other CWA Sections

Besides the three sections discussed above, various other provisions of the Clean Water Act can sometimes be the source of funds to support state-level volunteer monitoring activities. These include Section 106, which supports each state's base water quality program (including monitoring, planning, and implementation), and Section 604(b), which primarily supports state water quality management planning (such as identifying pollution problems and developing plans to control them). A state must pass through at least 40 percent of its 604(b) funding to interstate agencies, local planning commissions, and other legally chartered regional planning agencies.

To Get More Information

The first step in learning about the activities of any of these programs in your area is to contact your state water quality or lead nonpoint source agency. Volunteer monitoring, Clean Lakes, Nonpoint Source, and NEP program coordinators in each EPA region can help you find the right person. For information on EPA regional contacts, write or call Alice Mayo, USEPA, Assessment and Watershed Protection Division (4503F), 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460; 202/260-7018.

Alice Mayo is Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



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Editor's Note

The information in the accompanying article was current as of October 1993. As this newsletter goes to press, several versions of a new Clean Water Act are being debated in Congress. While these versions vary significantly in scope and emphasis, most include mention of volunteer monitoring. One - the Oberstar bill - actually mandates the establishment of citizen volunteer monitoring programs in each state, and designates 5 percent of the state's nonpoint source program funding or \$100,000, whichever is less, for this purpose. Clearly, if this bill or one like it is passed when the Clean Water Act is reauthorized (sometime in 1994), the funding picture for volunteer monitoring will change dramatically. Many of the provisions discussed in this article may also change.



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Government Funding Blues

by Karen Firehock

Once you find out about the numbers and amounts of grants available from the federal or state government, it may seem as though you've discovered the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. What's more, government grants can help solidify your relationship with state agencies and provide you with additional technical assistance and support. However, small grassroots organizations are seldom prepared to deal with the government's extensive reporting requirements. If your group is thinking about applying for a federal or state grant, consider the following:

- What kind of reporting will be required? Does your group have a staff person or volunteer with writing ability and financial training who will be able to write and submit quarterly reports to the government funding agency? You may need to submit 20- to 30-page reports every three months, and this can take a considerable amount of time for those not accustomed to such tasks.
- Do you have a professional bookkeeper or CPA (certified public accountant) on staff who can keep track of all financial dealings for the grant and provide accurate and timely financial data for reporting? Also bear in mind that if your grant is above a certain amount (specified by the funding agency) you will be required to have your books audited by an outside auditing firm. Does your grant include funds to pay for this required audit?
- If your grant involves EPA money and water quality monitoring, you will have to have a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) plan, which must be approved in advance of beginning work. Approval of the QA/QC plan can take months, which could delay the start of your project.
- Some grants are paid on a reimbursement basis ("after-the-fact grantmaking"). If you receive such a grant, can your organization afford to put up the necessary funds in advance? For example, can you spend \$10,000, then wait three months to be paid back?

The most important overall question to consider is, How much time will your organization have to spend to meet the red-tape requirements of the grant? A good rule of thumb is that if you estimate you will use more than 20 percent of the total staff time allotted to the project for filling out reports and other related

paperwork (photocopying your receipts, documenting your attendance at meetings, etc.), it may not be worth submitting the proposal. Some groups have stopped requesting federal funds because their costs to comply with reporting requirements began to approach 50 percent.

For small nonprofit groups without a fulltime accounting staff, government grants can become an unanticipated problem. Time spent doing extra accounting work is time not spent on the water body doing the hands-on conservation work that is needed in the first place. And over the past several years, many people have noticed that the red tape problem is getting worse.

So go after that pot of gold, but first find out if your group will be able to handle the reporting and accounting requirements.

Karen Firehock is Save Our Streams Director for the Izaak Walton League of America, 1401 Wilson Blvd., Level B, Arlington, VA 22209; 703/528-1818.



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Ask (Skillfully) and You Will Receive

Using Phone-a-thons to Build Grassroots Support

by Abby Markowitz

Probably the least favorite activity for any staff member or volunteer is fundraising. And of all the tasks associated with fundraising, the least favorite is "THE ASK." Most of us would rather do anything - take samples in snow, sleet, rain, or the monsoon season - than ask people for money to support our program.

Foundation grants can help initiate a program or fund special projects. But for many programs, the backbone of support comes from small donations and memberships. What's more, foundations are more likely to award a grant to an organization that can show evidence of strong grassroots support. If the local community doesn't support the program, why should a foundation? And the community won't support the program *unless we ask them*.

One-on-one communication with folks, whether face-to-face or by phone, is much scarier than a direct mail campaign - yet the direct personal approach also yields many more positive responses. Fortunately, there are specific "asking" skills that can be learned, practiced, and used successfully by even the most anxiety-ridden potential fundraiser. After one Maryland Save Our Streams phone-a-thon, a formerly nervous volunteer caller got so excited about using her new fundraising skills that she recruited two friends to help call the next night.

In the last several years, Maryland Save Our Streams has had great success in raising money through annual phone-a-thons. In 1992, with the help of more than 80 volunteers, we raised over \$14,000 in five nights of phoning. This article will focus on phone-a-thons, but many of the skills needed to conduct a successful phone-a-thon are easily translated to other types of grassroots fundraising - door-to-door canvasses, house parties, or membership pitches at workshops or events.

One caveat: This article will not cover the myriad of tasks that must be done *after* you put the pledge forms in the mail. Effective followup is critical to all fundraising efforts. However, the emphasis of this article is on the skills associated with the "ask."

Set an Achievable Goal

It is essential to set a goal for the dollar amount you want to raise, and equally critical for that goal to be realistic. Thankfully, there's a formula you can use to calculate a realistic goal for a night of phoning.

Let's say you have eight callers who will each be phoning from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Figure that about half the people on your calling list won't be home and that you'll have some bad numbers (wrong number, disconnected, etc.). Once a contact is reached, the average phone conversation will be between 3 and 6 minutes. Allowing time for callers to do paperwork between calls - filling out pledge forms, making notations on calling lists, and so on - let's estimate that each caller will talk with about 10 people per hour:

10 contacts × 2.5 hours = 25 contacts for the night per caller

25 contacts × 8 callers = 200 total contacts for the night

Next you need to determine your "yes" rate: How many of those 200 contacts will pledge money? This will depend both on your callers' skill and comfort level and on how "hot" or "cold" your list is. Do the people to be called have a history of giving to and/or volunteering with your organization? At Maryland Save Our Streams, when we are calling people with a giving or volunteer history, we generally estimate a 25-40% "yes" rate. To be conservative, let's say 25%.

200 contacts × 25% = 50 people will pledge money

Now, estimate the average contribution. Take into account how "hot" your list is, the economic climate, the economic class of those on the list, and historic amounts for your organization. At Maryland Save Our Streams, our basic memberships range from \$15 to \$35. Let's estimate \$20 per pledge.

50 pledges × \$20 per pledge = \$1,000 total pledges

So the total goal for the night is \$1,000, or \$125 for each caller. Obviously, the more skilled your callers are and the "hotter" the list, the more money you will raise.

It is important to work through this formula at the phone-a-thon, with your callers. If you walk in and announce, "OK, everyone is going to raise \$125 tonight," you will only add to the anxiety. But if people have an opportunity to help determine the goal, they will have a sense of ownership and see the goal as reasonable and "do-able." Also, if you set a conservative goal and your callers exceed it, well, you've just broken through the "I-can't-ask-for-money" syndrome.



Train Your Askers

Probably the number one mistake organizations make is not training staff and volunteers in fundraising skills. We wouldn't dream of sending out volunteer monitors without training, and we shouldn't expect to do any less for our fundraisers. Many cities and communities have professional funding trainers who may do pro bono or discounted training for your organization. Perhaps you can have one of these professionals train a core of trainers who can then train the larger group of volunteers.

At the phone-a-thon, schedule 30 to 60 minutes for a training session before the volunteers start calling. Here are some points to cover in the training session:

- **Anticipate and intercept callers' fears.** The first thing I do at a phone-a-thon training is to have callers introduce themselves and mention the one thing they are most afraid of. Most fears have to do with the big "R" - rejection.

Then I offer some ways of dealing with these concerns. For example: If you are worried about interrupting people's dinner, say something like, "I realize you may be eating dinner. Do you have a few minutes?" Most people will be far more receptive if you acknowledge that you are interrupting their routine.

I always tell callers that "no" is not the end of the world. Also, just because someone says no does not mean they will be rude or nasty. Some of my most enjoyable conversations have been with people who couldn't give but were very supportive.

- **Read your "turf" and your audience.** Each caller should take a few minutes to review his or her calling list or "turf." Is it a high-, middle-, or low-income community? Is it a waterfront community or one that has had specific water quality problems? Does your organization's monitoring program sample water in this community? The answers to these questions will help the caller decide what points to highlight and what amount to ask for.

It is also important to "read" each individual you call. Asking questions such as "Are you familiar with this program?" and "Are you aware of any local water pollution problems?" will help gauge a prospective donor's level of support. Remember to engage in dialogue, not monologue.

- **"Keep It Short and Simple" ("KISS").** Be brief and concise: Who (we are), What (we want from you tonight), What (we do, in 100 words or less), and Why (it's important to give). Provide callers with a short script or "rap" as a guide, but emphasize that they should not memorize it or read it verbatim. The written script should be no more than one side of a page and should outline a couple of program successes that the caller can emphasize.
- **Give people a reason to give.** The callers are selling both an idea and a product. The idea is the importance of monitoring and improving water quality. The product is a successful program with

positive results. Tell people what their support will do and be specific - for example, "A \$50 donation will pay for equipment maintenance for an entire year." Make the economic argument: "Volunteer monitoring costs about one-tenth of what professional monitoring services would cost."

- **Avoid qualifiers like "try" and "maybe."** A common mistake is using qualifiers that weaken the message. You aren't "trying" to make a difference in water quality. You are making a difference. People aren't "maybe" helping out with a pledge; they are supporting this work with a donation. If the caller is not confident, don't expect the prospect to be supportive.
- **Listen for three nos.** Instruct callers to listen for three objections or excuses, then politely end the call. A no can be disguised in a number of ways: eating dinner, unemployed, not familiar with the organization, giving the kids a bath. It is important to reassure callers that they have control - they can always hang up. You'd be surprised how many people think they have to stay on the phone and keep talking no matter what.
- **Ask for a specific amount.** If you don't name a specific amount, you are likely to get \$5 or \$10. Also remember that it is easier to go down than to come up. For example, if you ask for \$25 and the person says, "Sure, no problem," you can't really say, "Well, in that case, can you make it \$50?" But if you ask for \$50 and the person says, "I can't afford that," you can say, "Folks who can't afford that are shooting for \$25 for the year."

Phone-A-Thon Logistics

Phone-a-thons are usually quite short. For one thing, you don't want to burn out your callers by expecting them to phone for hours on end, and for another, the calling needs to be done during those limited times when people are most likely to be at home and awake.

The best times for phone-a-thons are weeknights (including Sunday night) between 6 and 9 p.m. or Saturday or Sunday afternoons between noon and 5 p.m.

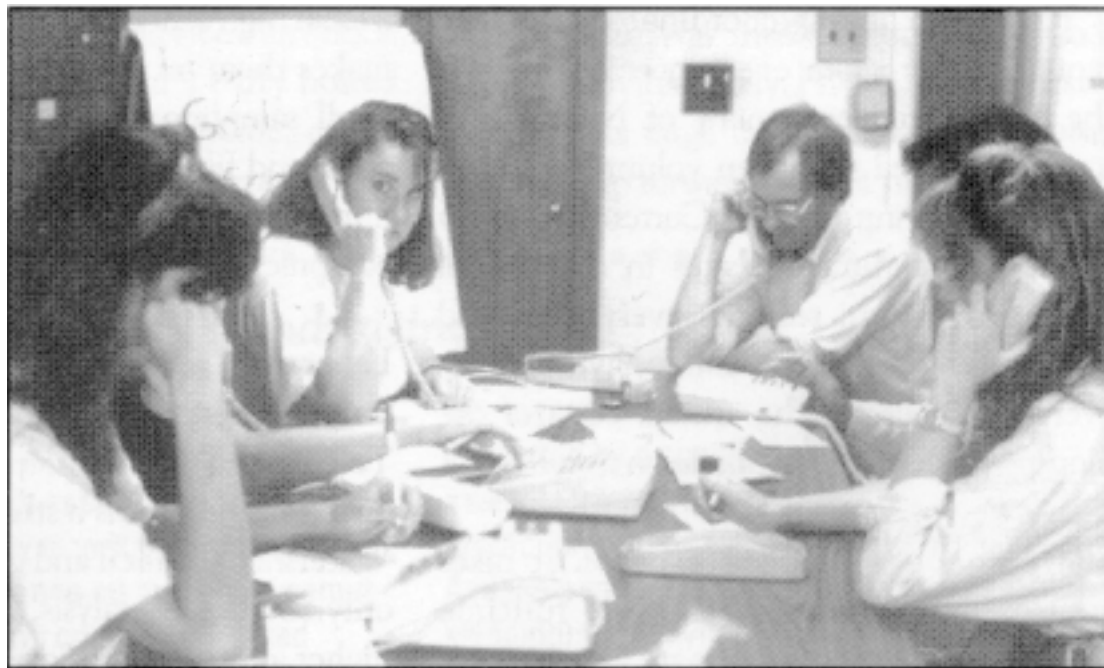
It's worth making an effort to find one central location with enough phones so everyone can be together. Real estate offices, private schools, and local phone company offices are examples of places that have several phone lines and are often willing to donate space. Recording the amount of money raised on a blackboard or piece of newsprint every half hour or so helps keep up the momentum and build team spirit. Snacks and beverages are a must - it's no fun to call with a dry mouth!

The more your askers know about the people they are contacting, the better. If possible, use index cards that list name, phone number, address, giving history, volunteer history, and waterway of interest. Sometimes Maryland Save Our Streams callers also bring their personal phone books and call friends, family, and co-workers.

During the training session, explain how to fill out the pledge forms and what kind of notations should be made on the calling lists or cards. Assign one or more volunteers who aren't on the phones to help with paperwork: recording pledges, stuffing and stamping envelopes. This is the perfect job for volunteers who want to help but can't bring themselves to call.

Have the trainer, or another experienced person, serve as a "runner," picking up pledge forms, offering encouragement, and keeping things running smoothly.

Get pledge forms out in the mail as soon as possible - even the same night, if your community has a 24-hour post office. People are impressed when a pledge form arrives a day or two after the call.



VALERIE BRENNAN

Have fun

Yes, fundraising can actually be fun. It's a good feeling to talk to people who share your concerns and to raise support for a program you believe in. The sense of camaraderie among the callers is one of the greatest rewards. I always tell my callers, "When you leave here tonight, you'll be thinking you had more fun than you expected. And there will be one less thing in the world that you think you can't accomplish."

Note: For sample pledge forms and scripts, contact Abby Markowitz (address below).

Abby Markowitz is a Project Director with Maryland Save Our Streams, 258 Scotts Manor Dr., Glen Burnie, MD 21061; 800-448-5826.

Maryland Save Our Streams is an independent nonprofit organization that has been monitoring the state's streams and rivers for 23 years.



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But How Do We Pay the Rent?

Many volunteer monitoring groups find that too much of their funding is "restricted" - that is, earmarked for specific uses. Government, foundation, and corporate grantors usually like to see their money tied to a tangible, well-defined activity or product. They are far less enthusiastic about paying for an organization's basic operating costs.

Friends of the North Fork Shenandoah River, a 600-member nonprofit watershed association in Virginia, is typical. "We can find funding for special projects," says Pat Maier, the organization's secretary (and only paid staffperson). "It's paying the rent and the phone bill that's the problem." For example, a little over one-third of Friends' annual budget currently comes from three grants, each of which is designated for specific activities: a Water Projects grant to test well water for low-income families, a Patagonia grant for a minimum instream flow study, and a Virginia Environmental Endowment grant allocated among the above two projects plus a campaign to have the North Fork designated as "exceptional waters."

But, unglamorous though they may be, the rent and the bills - not to mention staff salaries - do have to be paid. So where does a small nonprofit organization get money to cover these expenses? Often, from grassroots sources - the organization's members and the local community.

Friends of the North Fork depends on member dues and contributions as its fiscal "bedrock" - an ongoing, reliable source of unrestricted funds. Together, dues and contributions account for about 40 percent of the annual budget. To gain additional unrestricted funds, the group has raised money from the community through a wide variety of special events. "When we hear of a way to make money, we dive in," says Maier.

For example, Friends started off last summer with a "monster yard sale" that netted roughly \$5,000. They went on to hold a golf tournament sponsored by about 25 local businesses, an auction at which a professional auctioneer volunteered his services, an "SSS" ("Sipping, Sweets, and Social") party hosted by a member couple in their home, and a raffle for a Bass-Pro raft. Members participated in Saturday sales of barbecued chicken at a roadside stand, and in the local Food Lion supermarket's Community Way Days program, which designated three days on which members who shopped at the store could specify that a 5 percent rebate on their receipts would go to Friends.



Most of these events brought in only a few hundred dollars each; still, it all adds up. Over the last several years, fundraising events have made up about one-fourth of the organization's total annual budget.

Events such as these are obviously labor-intensive. Fortunately, Friends can always depend on its large corps of dedicated volunteers to step forward and get the job done.



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Is Grassroots Fundraising Worth the Effort?

Why should you spend 10 minutes on the phone raising a \$20 pledge when you can get thousands of dollars from one corporate sponsor, or tens of thousands from a single grant?

The answer depends, in part, on your goals. If you are interested in community outreach and education, then grassroots fundraising pays off in other ways besides financially. Community fundraising campaigns and events give you an opportunity to tell more people about your group and your cause. Membership drives build your base of supporters and increase the advocacy power of your organization.

Grassroots fundraising campaigns also offer opportunities for volunteers to be actively involved, whether in directly asking for donations or in assisting with special events. This builds volunteers' sense of ownership over the program and nurtures volunteer leadership.

But grassroots fundraising makes sense for hardheaded financial reasons as well. It increases the diversity of your funding base - especially important during these difficult economic times, when a single source, such as a government grant, can dry up almost instantly. It provides you with renewable, long-term support (unlike grants, which may be one-time only). And grassroots funds are unrestricted; community supporters aren't going to complain if you use their donations to fix your copy machine or mail a legislative alert to your members.



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Membership Dues Fund Lake Monitoring in Michigan

by Ann Baughman

Lake water quality monitoring is just one of many watershed protection projects administered by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, but the Council considers it an important enough program that we have institutionalized it as a "basic service." This means that funds from all member donations are used to help pay for the monitoring program. If each lake association had to pay the actual cost of the monitoring - over \$200 per year - many lakes that are now being monitored would have to be dropped from the program.

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, which serves four counties in northern Michigan, has over 2,100 members, including individuals and lake associations. The Council's annual budget is about \$300,000, of which approximately half comes from membership donations and half from grants and contract services.

The Council has coordinated the lake monitoring program ever since 1984, when the Michigan Department of Natural Resources dropped its citizen volunteer chlorophyll-monitoring program. Currently, over 35 volunteers monitor 28 lakes in our region. They take Secchi readings every week and filter water samples for chlorophyll analysis every other week. The annual costs of the monitoring program break down as follows:

Staff: This is the largest expense. It takes approximately one-eighth of a fulltime staffperson's time to coordinate all aspects of the program - including entering the data, preparing data reports, training the volunteers, and producing the newsletter. Cost: about \$4,000.



Volunteer Merriam Cramer filters a lake water sample for chlorophyll analysis.

Equipment: Secchi disks are purchased from a local high school technical arts class, which makes them on order for \$6 apiece. Chlorophyll sampling equipment consists of a syringe and filter assembly (\$19) for each volunteer, plus filters and plastic test tubes. Total equipment cost for all lakes: about \$260.

Laboratory analysis: At the end of the season, all filters are sent to a local firm, Aqua-Terra Labs, for chlorophyll analysis. The owner of the firm is a strong supporter of the Watershed Council and gives us a great price: only \$5.50 per analysis, compared to \$14 or higher at other labs. Total cost: about \$750.

Data reports: Using the Secchi disk readings and the chlorophyll results, we calculate the trophic status index (TSI) for each lake. The results are sent out in news releases. Also, all Watershed Council members receive a copy of the report for the lake that is closest to where they live. The cost for printing the reports and mailing them to about 3,000 addresses is approximately \$830.

Communicating with volunteers: Volunteers receive a one-page newsletter twice a year, and an annual directory of all monitors and alternate monitors. Cost: about \$100.

Adding it all up, the monitoring program costs approximately \$6,000 per year, or \$215 per lake.

The benefits of the program are well worth the total cost, and we are pleased with how much we can accomplish for this small amount. Working with volunteers is the most efficient and cost-effective way to gather valuable data, increase public involvement, and gain broad public support for water quality issues.

Ann Baughman is a Water Resource Specialist with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, P.O. Box 300, Conway, MI 49722; 616/347-1181.

*The **Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council** is a private, nonprofit organization that works to preserve the environmental integrity and economic and aesthetic values of water resources in local watersheds through education, advocacy, research, and technical assistance.*



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Resources for Grassroots Fundraising

Kim Klein Videos and Book

"People give away money for only one reason - self-interest. Giving away money is pleasurable." So says Kim Klein in one of her six videos on grassroots fundraising.

What do donors get out of giving money to your group? First, Klein says, they get to feel good about themselves. Second, they get a chance to pay you to do work that they want done. And finally, they get to feel powerful because they have used their money to support work they believe in.

By the end of Klein's video, you feel actually eager to go out and do someone a favor by asking them to donate to your organization.

Klein, who has over ten years' experience in grassroots fundraising, has packed her insights into the videos and into her book, *Fundraising for Social Change*. The book offers pithy advice in a friendly style - for example, on thanking donors, Klein writes, "Certainly if you knew you could earn \$25 in two minutes, using skills you already have, without doing anything illegal, you would do it. That is what writing a thank you note is all about."

In both the videos and the book, Klein's goal is to help low-budget organizations "move away from reliance on foundations, corporations, and government assistance." So you won't find tips on how to write a grant proposal, but you will find guidance on the whole gamut of methods for building community-based support - from mailings, phone-a-thons, and canvassing to special events and major gifts campaigns.

The videotapes cost from \$35 to \$60 each to rent, and \$100 each to purchase. To rent or buy the videos, contact Lynn Michau, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, Room 500, New York, New York, 10012; 212/529-5300. (You may also be able to view the videos for free at a Foundation Center library.)

Fundraising for Social Change is available for \$20, plus \$2 for shipping, from Chardon Press, Box 101, Inverness, CA 94937; 415/663-8562.

Other Resources

River Wealth, a 40-page booklet produced by River Network, contains ideas for more than 50 ways to raise money from local community sources through events, services and sales, memberships, and business support. Most of the suggestions are illustrated by a specific example from a river protection group. Available for \$7 (includes shipping) from River Network, P.O. Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207; 800/423-8747.



The Grass Roots Fundraising Book: How to Raise Money in Your Community, by Joan Flanagan, is a highly readable guide packed with useful advice, with especially complete coverage of special events. Available for \$14.95 from Contemporary Books, 180 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601; 312/782-9181.

The **Institute for Conservation Leadership** is an independent nonprofit organization that provides leadership training for volunteer institutions that protect and conserve the environment. Training topics include grassroots fundraising, creating a board of directors, and building a volunteer organization. For information, contact ICL at 2000 P Street, NW, Suite 413, Washington DC 20036; 202/466-3330.



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A River Association's Lab Conducts Business

by Robin Ulmer

Q: *How can a river association simultaneously enhance the credibility of its water quality data, subsidize the costs of laboratory analysis, and help watershed towns pay for expensive mandated water testing?*

A: *Create its own certified laboratory and offer low-cost testing to the public. This, at least, was the strategy used by the Boquet River Association (BRASS) in Essex County, New York.*

The Boquet River lies entirely within a large, poor, rural county. Because only scanty water quality data existed on this state-designated "Wild, Scenic and Recreational River," BRASS established a citizen volunteer monitoring program in 1983.

We set up our own makeshift lab, first in a member's home and later in an unused town building, to analyze the samples. While performing our own analyses was much cheaper than paying an outside lab, BRASS was still spending a good portion of membership income on our monitoring program. So, after nine years, we decided that it would make sense economically to start operating our lab as a business.

Certification requirements for laboratories handling environmental (non-potable) water vary from state to state. In New York, state law requires that all water testing mandated by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) be performed by a lab that is certified by the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH). DOH approval procedures are strict in terms of methods, equipment, and quality assurance/quality control procedures, but since BRASS wanted to be able to perform DEC-mandated tests for local towns, we needed to obtain DOH certification.

To meet the certification requirements, BRASS sought funding from several foundations. They

responded favorably to the fact that BRASS serves a poor, rural county with no other certified lab. Getting our lab certified would not only help BRASS but also help local towns afford mandated testing. We received \$43,000 from two area private foundations, which we used to renovate the building we had been using for our lab and purchase equipment to perform analyses of total and fecal coliforms, suspended solids, ortho- and total phosphate, pH, specific conductivity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, BOD, and nitrogen/ammonia.

BRASS's lab received certification in June 1993 and now provides low-cost analyses of non-potable water to the public. The proceeds from these analyses are used to partially fund the cost of analyzing BRASS's own samples (monthly baseline data plus data for high-flow and low-flow conditions).



Laboratory director Rachel Hopkins at work in the BRASS lab.

Calculating Costs

Before approaching foundations, BRASS had to put together a business proposal. We obtained the NYS DOH "Environmental Laboratory Approval Program Certification Manual" and learned the requirements for certification. We studied the DEC's list of required regulatory tests to determine the types and frequencies of analyses our potential customers would be needing. We surveyed local governments, environmental groups, and lake associations on their needs for environmental water testing. We estimated costs for building renovations, equipment, lab personnel, chemicals and reagents, and general overhead.

BRASS identified two main potential sources of laboratory business: mandated wastewater tests for sewage treatment facilities, camps, schools, and mines; and samples collected voluntarily from lakes, ponds, and streams by private associations or individuals. Based on a conservative estimate of total business, BRASS decided to initially operate its lab only part-time.

BRASS is able to offer analyses at rates about 20 percent below those of commercial laboratories in the

area. This is largely because of our low overhead. The town agreed to lease us our laboratory building for \$1/year on a five-year renewable lease. In return, the renovations "belong" to the town, and BRASS will conduct the town's required wastewater analyses at no cost.

Revenues

So far, BRASS's laboratory business covers only part of the cost of our own monitoring program. However, our ability to perform certified tests and guarantee reliable analyses has opened up another source of funding: research studies. For instance, BRASS received grant money from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, as well as funding via Clean Water Act section 604(b), to assist in data collection for a study of phosphorus loadings to Lake Champlain (the Boquet is a major tributary to the lake) and to verify suspected nonpoint source pollution in the county.

Some pointers

For other volunteer monitoring groups who are thinking about establishing a certified lab, here are a few tips that may save money and hair loss:

- Purchase (about \$90) the most recent edition of Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater (APHA, 1015 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005).
- Add 25 percent to your estimate of lab technician's time, to cover time spent doing duplicate testing, quality control measurements and records, proficiency tests, etc.
- Find out whether distillation/deionization is needed (depends on the quality of the local water supply).
- Don't forget eye wash stations, emergency shower, and fire extinguishers.
- Check out procedures and costs for disposal of chemical wastes.
- Tap local businesses for good used equipment (BRASS was donated a gas chromatograph).

Robin Ulmer is Director of the Boquet River Association (BRASS), P.O. Box 217, Elizabethtown, NY 12932; 518/873-6301.

BRASS is a 200-member nonprofit organization that plants trees and builds structures for erosion control, designs riverside parks and trails, and monitors water quality and sediment.



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Cooperative Extension Support for Citizen Monitoring

by Linda Green and Jeff Schloss

Most of us, if we've heard of it at all, think of the Cooperative Extension in terms of agriculture, home economics, or perhaps 4-H. And indeed, Extension's traditional focus has been on helping farmers. But today it does much more than that.

Extension, established in 1914 as a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the land grant universities, is a national educational network whose mission is to extend research-based knowledge into the community. At least in some states, that mission has evolved into support for volunteer monitoring programs.

Extension-Supported Monitoring Programs

Although Extension does not provide outright grants to citizen monitoring groups - in the way that, say, a foundation or the Environmental Protection Agency might - a number of volunteer water quality monitoring programs across the country currently receive support through partnerships with Extension. Each of these programs is unique in its approach to funding, but they all share several common themes:

1. overall program funding comes from a variety of sources, creating partnerships between the participating organizations and Extension
2. in most programs Extension staff members are assigned to coordinate and assist the volunteer monitoring programs
3. often Extension provides substantial in-kind support, such as technical assistance, training, or secretarial help

Rhode Island's Watershed Watch program, based at the University of Rhode Island, is a combined effort of concerned citizen groups, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and Rhode Island Cooperative Extension. Members of the citizens groups do the actual monitoring. The citizens groups also pay to participate in the program, providing about 25% of total program funding. Clean Lakes

Program funds, passed through RI DEM, provide another 25%. Extension contributes the remaining 50% of program funding, paying for salaries for program coordinator Linda Green and a graduate student, and for secretarial support.

Maine Cooperative Extension administers an estuary and tidal river monitoring program called the Clean Water Program. The program started with funding primarily from three sources: [Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service](#) (the marine equivalent of Cooperative Extension), the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and Extension. Extension now provides approximately 65% of total program funding, covering program coordinator Esperanza Stancioff's salary and paying for some monitoring equipment, supplies, training, and secretarial support. The program also receives substantial funding through EPA (Nonpoint Source Program), as well as from the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center and other sources. The Clean Water Program and the Maine State Planning Office's Shore Stewards Program work cooperatively to train, fund, and sustain coastal monitoring groups statewide.

At the University of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring Program (NH LLMP) was supported for its first 10 years through a variety of temporary grants and gifts. Then, in 1989, the university's Cooperative Extension integrated the NH LLMP into its newly formed water resources program, benefitting both parties. Extension was able to expand its outreach, research, and grassroots monitoring component, and the monitoring program gained a stable source of funding. Extension funding covers 75% of program coordinator Jeff Schloss's salary and all of a fulltime program assistant's salary. Extension also provides in-kind support, including secretarial services and the use of county Extension offices and staff across the state to help recruit, train, and supply volunteer monitors. NH LLMP receives additional funding from participants, towns, conservation commissions, community organizations, and watershed or lake associations.

Oklahoma's brand-new "Blue Thumb" program is modeled after Cooperative Extension's long-established Master Gardener program, in which volunteers are trained to answer inquiries from the public. After eight weeks of training, Blue Thumb volunteers conduct monitoring on streams and lakes and provide community education on water quality. The program was originated by Extension and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, who applied for an EPA 319 (Nonpoint Source Program) grant to fund it. Currently 60 percent of funding comes from the EPA. Extension also pays for most of the program coordinator's salary, and additional support comes from the Tulsa County Conservation District.

On the West Coast, Washington State Cooperative Extension supports a number of programs that rely on volunteer monitors. Many of these programs are at the county level, and all are partnerships with outside organizations. To mention just two examples: volunteer monitors shellfish for bacterial contamination and paralytic shellfish poisoning in partnership with state and local health departments, and other volunteers monitor salmon and salmon habitat in cooperation with the Port Gamble Indian tribe.

In some cases, Extension does not provide funding but does give support through in-kind assistance. In Wisconsin, for example, Extension supports the state Department of Natural Resources Self-Help Monitoring Program by providing assistance with publishing and distributing materials for volunteers, publicizing the program, and recruiting volunteers.

Getting Support from Extension

In 1989, Extension established a program of National Initiatives to focus its resources on issues of immediate concern. Happily for volunteer water quality monitoring groups, the Water Quality Initiative is currently the most prominent (though that could change in future years).

Through the Water Quality Initiative, every state now has a Water Quality Coordinator, who is the best person to talk to if you are interested in exploring the potential for a partnership with Extension. Contact the land grant institution in your state and ask for the name and number of the water quality specialist, or try looking in your local phone book under "[your county name] Cooperative Extension." A free national directory of State Extension Water Quality Coordinators is available from USDA Extension Service, Ag. Box 0914, Washington DC 20250-0914. For a national listing of land grant universities, order the free leaflet "Commitment to Change" from USDA Extension Service, Washington DC 20250-0900.

Extension works in four-year planning cycles. The current cycle ends on September 30, 1995, and funds for new programs will not be available until the next cycle. This may seem like a long time to wait - but according to Marcia Morreira, program and staff development specialist at Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, now is actually an excellent time to get started. Each state is just now beginning to plan for the next cycle, a process that includes assessing the needs for various programs. In determining these needs, Extension relies on input from representatives from academic institutions, local and state agencies, businesses, and community groups - in short, from any group that has an interest in a particular program. There certainly is a place for volunteer groups to participate in this process.

Natural Partners

Each state's Extension program is different, with priorities driven by that state's specific needs. But even if your state Extension has not supported volunteer monitoring programs in the past, it should not be difficult to make the case that such programs are natural partners for Extension. Not only does volunteer water quality monitoring fit neatly within Extension's traditional mission of bringing scientific expertise into the community, it also dovetails with Extension's current National Water Quality Initiative. Moreover, Extension has a long tradition of working with volunteers (for example, in 4-H and the Master Gardener program), and a commitment to maintaining grassroots connections. As Blue Thumb coordinator Sue Gray points out, Extension is first and foremost an educational program, so in seeking Extension support, remember to stress your program's potential for public outreach and education.

Linda Green is Program Coordinator for Watershed Watch, Department of Natural Resources Science, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881; 401/ 792-2905.

Jeff Schloss is a Water Resources Specialist with UNH Cooperative Extension and Program Coordinator for NH LLMP, 109 Pettee Hall, UNH Cooperative Extension, Durham, NH 03824; 603/ 862-3848.



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Sea Grant

The marine counterpart of Cooperative Extension is the Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service (SGMAS). The Sea Grant College Program, established in 1966, is a partnership between NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and universities in all coastal and Great Lakes states and U.S. territories.

Like Extension, SGMAS coordinates or supports citizen monitoring programs in several states. Unlike Extension, SGMAS does provide grants in some cases.

Some coastal and Great Lakes water monitoring programs currently receiving Sea Grant funding and/or in-kind support are: Salt Pond Watchers in Rhode Island, the Clean Water Program in Maine, Great Bay Watch in New Hampshire, Falmouth Pond Watchers in Massachusetts, Barnegat Bay Watch in New Jersey, the Inland Bays Citizen Monitoring Program in Delaware, Harborwatch in South Carolina, and Superior Lake Watch (coordinated from Minnesota). Washington State Sea Grant provides technical assistance to several local monitoring groups.

For a list of SGMAS agents in your state, write to Sea Grant Directory Manager, NOAA, Sea Grant, 1335 East-West Hwy, Silver Springs, MD 20910; or call Bud Griswold, 310/ 713-2435.

- Virginia Lee

Rhode Island SGMAS



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In-kind Help from Partners

Many volunteer monitoring programs stretch their dollars with in-kind support from business or government partners. The possibilities for in-kind help are almost endless and range from donated office space or equipment to free or low-cost lab testing, data analysis, use of employee time for monitoring projects or special events, and help in producing brochures, banners, or videos.

Here are just three out of hundreds of examples:

1. Maryland Save Our Streams and Westinghouse Electronic Systems Group have cooperated as partners for the past five years. In addition to financial support, Westinghouse has provided SOS with in-kind services such as printing brochures, developing visual displays for use at events, making copies of slide shows, and donating surplus office materials.
2. Newmarket High School, a participant in New Hampshire's Great Bay Watch program, has formed an alliance with the local sewage treatment plant. Plant technician Joyce Hammer runs split samples for the program, assists with coliform counts, provides training, and gives students tours of the plant.
3. The San Francisco BayKeeper's newsletter recently got a complete face-lift, thanks to the donated talents of designers from Miller Freeman, Inc., publishing company. Miller Freeman employees also conduct on-the-water patrols in the BayKeeper boat.



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Partnering, Texas Style

A State Agency "Wholesales" Volunteer Monitoring

by Eric Mendelman

Given Texas's population - 17 million - and the state's reputation for doing everything on the grand scale, perhaps it's not surprising that Texas Watch, the statewide volunteer environmental monitoring program coordinated by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), has set itself an ambitious goal: 20,000 volunteer monitors by the year 2000.

The challenge now is to build an infrastructure that can support 20,000 monitors - and ensure that the data they produce are credible and useful. This is not an inexpensive proposition. The cost of the test kits used in the program - about \$300 each - is only the beginning. Texas Watch's commitment to producing high-quality data means that the program also needs to provide careful training, technical assistance, data management systems, and the resources for putting the data to work.

Obviously, the state coffers cannot foot the whole bill. And with 3,000 volunteers already collecting data, the six-person Texas Watch staff cannot provide hands-on assistance to every monitoring project. To ensure that monitors' resource needs are met, Texas Watch builds partnerships that bring together all the groups in a watershed that are interested in monitoring, including both public agencies and private organizations (such as industries and nonprofit groups).

TNRCC
Research
Specialist
Tracy Williams
(center)
trains monitors
Kenya Banks
and
Becky Jimenez
on the
Rio Grande
near El Paso.



WAYNE BAKER

Once watershed partnerships are launched, Texas Watch's goal is to develop resources at the local level to the point where minimal state support is needed to carry out volunteer monitoring activities. As one Texas Watch partner put it, "Texas Watch is wholesaling volunteer monitoring, and the partners are retailing it."

Benefits of Texas Watch

Texas Watch offers partners a number of benefits that help save costs, manage volunteers and data, and ensure that volunteer data are of high quality.

Standardization of methods. Texas Watch has developed a basic, standardized five-parameter surface water quality monitoring program (dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, clarity, and conductivity) for partners to adopt. Texas Watch also provides technical assistance for adding parameters to the basic program.

Training and quality assurance. Texas Watch offers standardized training in monitoring methods and quality assurance/quality control procedures. People who receive this training are then certified to train others. Texas Watch staff help with quality assurance by conducting parallel testing using a HydroLab.

Data use. TNRCC is committed to using Texas Watch data to support and enhance the regulatory process - from setting stream standards to permitting and enforcement - and to making the data available to all Texas Watch participants and the general public.

Participation in a statewide effort. The individual watershed monitoring networks are tied together statewide through a variety of communication and recognition efforts sponsored by Texas Watch: monthly reports, a bimonthly newsletter, an annual statewide monitoring conference, and statewide recognition through a Governor's Awards Program.

Enhanced credibility. According to Sara Youngblood, monitoring program coordinator for a local citizens group called Save Our Salado, working under the auspices of the TNRCC as part of a statewide monitoring effort gives organizations like hers more clout and credibility when they deal with their city council and county government.

How to Build Successful Partnerships

Building partnership networks that bring these benefits to volunteer monitors takes careful planning, clear communication, and thorough administrative followup. Texas Watch relies on the following building blocks for creating successful partnerships:

1. Set watershed-based goals

Texas Watch encourages groups to set broad watershed goals, rather than limited goals that focus on particular problems. Watershed goals help groups attract multiple partners, including organizations with basinwide responsibilities, such as river authorities.

2. Clearly state the criteria for partners

Before discussing in detail the level of resources an organization wishes to give to volunteer monitoring, Texas Watch asks partners to agree to the following basic commitments:

- to work in coalition with partners from all sectors of society - industry, public agencies, and citizen groups
- to work with these partners to form a common goal for environmental protection activities in the watershed
- to work with other partners to ensure that all the needs of volunteer monitors are fulfilled - from equipment, to data management, to forming a plan of action to deal with suspected problems or environmental emergencies.

3. Define the core group, then enlist public entities

In forming a partnership network, Texas Watch begins with those individuals and entities most committed to volunteer monitoring and works with this core group to establish preliminary watershed goals.

The core group then approaches other potential partners. It is helpful to approach public entities, such as federal, state, or local agencies, early in the organizing process because public entities can help legitimize the project from the start, creating an attractive environment for recruiting new partners. Public entities can also provide technical expertise.

The core group works with the public entities to refine the preliminary goals and clarify environmental information needs. Determining which of these needs the public can fill is an important step in getting a public entity to support volunteer monitoring.

4. Offer different levels of participation

In order to allow many different groups to participate as partners, Texas Watch offers three different levels of partnership:

Donor Partners contribute cash or equipment; they have no specified time commitment to the program. An example of a Donor Partner is an industry that purchases kits for monitors.

Patron Partners contribute in-kind services such as trainers or lab services and are required to sustain these services for a minimum of two years. An example of a Patron Partner is a city that commits to analyze samples for fecal coliforms for two years.

Lead Partners take full responsibility for providing all the resources volunteers need to collect valid data and to use the information to solve environmental problems. A Lead Partner can supply these resources exclusively through its own budget, or it can develop and coordinate a network of partners to support the monitors' needs.

For any level of partnership, it is important to put the commitments in writing and have the agreement endorsed by the organization's top leadership. This ensures full organizational commitment, not simply the commitment of one or two staff members who are willing to take personal time to attend network meetings.

Although partnering in Texas is off to a great start, it is not without its problems. Sometimes organizations are reluctant to sign on as partners, due to the fear of overcommitting, concerns about liability, or hesitations over working with a traditional rival - the public. However, with the number of willing partners far outweighing the number holding back, reaching 20,000 participants may prove quite easy. Sustaining the program's commitment to producing high quality data and solving environmental problems is the more compelling challenge.

Eric Mendelman is the Partnership Coordinator for Texas Watch, TNRCC, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711; 512-475-4595.



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Texas Watch Partnerships; From Theory to Practice

The city of Sugar Land, Texas, might seem like an unlikely place for a water monitoring partnership to thrive. Oyster Creek, which runs through the heart of the city, has experienced periodic fish kills for over 20 years. Residents have tended to pin the blame on industrial discharges and to criticize government agencies for responding inadequately.

Yet in spite of these historical antagonisms, a successful Texas Watch Partnership Network now operates in the Oyster Creek watershed. A volunteer monitoring group initiated by the city government forms the core of the network. Local industries and state, local, and regional government entities are all participating. Funding to purchase monitoring kits came from local industries and businesses, TNRCC, and the Brazos River Authority (BRA). Local industries and businesses also provide technical support, including data input and review, and the BRA analyzes volunteer-collected fecal coliform samples in its wastewater treatment lab.

One key element in building a consensus among such a diverse group of partners was to set a broad, watershed-based goal. Anna Dunbar, a program coordinator for Sugar Land's Department of Community Development, says, "We made it clear upfront that our purpose was not to monitor industrial discharge - our purpose was to monitor the watershed."



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USDA Agencies: An Untapped Resource?

by Jeff Schloss

While co-writing the accompanying article, I became increasingly aware that there are resources within Cooperative Extension and other USDA agencies that are being overlooked by citizen monitoring groups. These resources always include technical assistance from field staff and specialists. If your volunteer monitoring activities interface well with projects the agencies are involved in, you may be able to receive additional support, perhaps including hard dollars.

Working with USDA agencies can also be a very proactive way to find local solutions to problem situations discovered through your monitoring efforts, without having to involve a regulatory agency (at least initially). Tapping any or all of the agencies listed below can enhance the effectiveness of your program - *without cost*.

Soil Conservation Service (SCS) - assists landowners and communities with erosion and flood control, nonpoint source pollution control, and wetlands management and protection. Recently, funding has been provided to SCS through Hydrologic Unit Water Quality Initiatives, which designate specific large watersheds (one or two per state) for the implementation of management practices to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Volunteer programs may be able to participate in monitoring to determine the effectiveness of these practices. Additionally, the SCS uses volunteers in its Earth Team program.

Association of Conservation Districts (ACD) - a regional arm of SCS, with offices in every county. Some ACDs are cooperators in EPA NPS-funded projects.

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) - another regional arm of SCS. ASCS is most interested in helping with solutions to water quality problems that are related to agriculture. Cost-share funding is possible for water impoundments to reduce soil erosion, grazing land protection, and shallow impoundments for wildlife.

Forest Service - assists in the management and protection of state, federal, and private forests; concerned with water quality as it relates to forestry practices and management. Research stations and field offices may have need of cost-effective water-quality monitoring of federal forest lands, which your

program could provide.

To locate the nearest office for any of these agencies, look in the United States Government section of your phone book under "Agriculture Department."