

# TOOL KIT

## Developing and Managing Partnerships in Coal-Impacted Watersheds



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The information in this tool kit is to be used in conjunction with the following materials :

-“Getting In Step: Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Your Watershed”  
Published by the EPA

-“Getting In Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns”  
Published by the EPA

-“Getting In Step: Building Partnerships and Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns”  
Published by the EPA

-“Key EPA / Internet tolls / for Watershed Management”  
Published by the EPA

# Key Questions for Assessing Your Community

(Source: "River Talk!: Communicating a Watershed Message" by River Network)

Here is a checklist of questions to research about your community. The answers will provide you with insights into problems affecting your watershed, who has the potential to help protect it, the political, cultural, and economic lay of the land, issues that move people, what people think about the river, and what they know and think about your organization.

**-How much development has already occurred in and around the community? Where are the open spaces, and what are their statuses?** An area planning map that identifies open spaces should indicate land that is protected, such as park land, and land that is privately held. You will be able to see the relationship of these spaces to the river and streams in the watershed, and perhaps to identify areas that are permitted for certain types of development.

**-How much development is going on? How much opposition is there?** What decisions are before the local land use decision-makers? What projects have already broken ground? What's the proclivity of decision-makers towards development? Whom do they listen to? Is there opposition to development, where does it come from, is it organized, is it strong? Do the decision-makers perceive that citizens want to stop or manage development? Or do they see opposition as weak?

**-What are the known areas of significant pollution on your watershed map?** Newspaper archives and community organizations can be good sources of information about point-source pollution, such as buried toxic waste or pollution from poor industrial practices. Other environmental organizations may have already identified agricultural operations (chicken and cattle farming, pesticides) that are polluting the water. Pinpointing known sources of pollution on your watershed map could make some neighborhoods jump out as candidates for enlisting in your watershed campaign.

**-What ethnic and cultural constituencies live in your watershed?** Each ethnic and cultural community has its own relationship to and connection with the river. Find out about these relationships and histories, and target messages accordingly.

**-What income levels are represented in the community?** What relationships do people at different income levels have to the river? Historical data shows that higher-income communities are more likely to get involved with environmental concerns. Is this true in your community?

**-What is the age mix in the community?** Sometimes people with more free time- retired people, for example- are able to engage in volunteer activities more frequently.

**-What is the local political history in the community?** What big issues has the community faced in the past 20, 10, 5 years? Recently? What issues just never go away? What, if any, environmental issues have been important to the community? Watershed issues? Has the community been dominated by one political party or another, and if so, what are the defining issues or themes? Are there ways that the community has consistently been characterized as over the years...like, "Minneapolis is a good

government city” or “Portland works hard to manage its growth” or “Sometown has always been owned by developers?”

**-What is the relationship with politicians in the community?** Are they viewed as controlled by developers? As neutral? As environmentally oriented? By whom? What are the roles of local, state, and federal agencies- staff and officials- when it comes to resolving conflicts over land use and other issues that affect your watershed?

**-Who are the movers and the shakers in the community?** Who are the influential civic leaders? Religious leaders? Leaders of ethnic and cultural groups? Neighborhood leaders? Business leaders? Who are the corporate good citizens, and who are the polluters?

**-How is your watershed organization perceived in the community?** Is it viewed as strong? A source of leadership on matters related to the river...development...water quality? Collaborators? Agitators? So new that it's not a player yet? By whom?

**-What are the uses of the river and is it viewed as a part of the community?** Is it used for recreation- fishing, boating, and swimming? Are the streambanks highly developed- residentially? Industrially? Are there parks along the river? Or is it invisible...out of sight, out of mind?

**-What is the history of activism in the area?** Are the citizens engaged in the community? Do they believe that their voices are heard and make a difference in local governing processes? In what areas has activism been strong? Is there a history of activism to protect the government? On what types of issues? Or do citizens feel powerless in the face of moneyed interests? Do they refrain from getting involved?

Assess your community by researching these questions, and you will be able to make a more strategic approach to your market by understanding:

- The “state of your watershed” relative to development and other issues. Pinpointing development, proposed development, and pollution sources on your watershed map may cause that geographic audiences and strategies to jump right off the map!
- The political climate for managing development and other watershed issues: decision-maker leanings, relationships among segments of the market with decision-makers, degree of activism among citizens, history of concern in the community about environmental issues.
- Demographic factors that indicate the potential for organizing in your community (ethnic and cultural constituencies, median incomes, age mix).
- What the river means to the community. The key to finding supporters and volunteers is *self-interest*. A person who is young or old, rich or poor will get involved if they have a direct interest in the health of the river or watershed.
- How people in the community perceive your watershed organization.

## How to Research These Questions

**-Visit the local planning office.** You should be able to get maps and planning documents that show developed land, open space, and land where permits for development and pending. Chat with the planning office staff, and you may pick up some interesting insights that do not appear in the documents.

**-Review newspaper archives at the library.** Old newspaper articles, letters to the editors, editorials, and op-eds can be great sources for learning about local political history, issues that have engaged the community, who the players are, how the river is perceived, whether water or environmental issues have gotten attention, and how development conflicts have panned out.

**-Ask the Chamber of Commerce and/or economic development entities for economic and demographic data.** These organization may have data about the community in terms of peoples' occupations, employers (types of industries; medical, education, government, professional and other employers), age mix, incomes, education levels, political party affiliations and other information. If the Chamber does not have all of this data, ask for recommendations for other sources.

**-Access published sources of demographic data.** You can get a fair amount of demographic data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and from local libraries. You might also engage a graduate student or college marketing class in a project to research demographic data in your community.

**-Ask people in other environmental organizations to share or trade research with you.** A land trust, for example, may already have research on development that they will share with you. Local chapters of national environmental organization may already have researched sources of agricultural waste and pesticide run-off, or point-source pollution from industrial sites with below par pollution control and toxic waste disposal practices. And you no doubt will have some up-to-date research that they would be glad to have.

**-Create a directory of organizations in your watershed.** This will give you a feel for the interests within your community and the power bases as well as give you a head start on building an excellent organizing network. This list would include:

- “the choir” (other environmental organization and community groups concerned with development)
- likely “affinity” organizations (garden clubs, health care providers, parent groups)
- “influentials” (organizations of people you would like to engage in watershed protection, such as civic organizations like Kiwanis, 4H, Junior League, and Rotary Club)
- good government organizations (League of Women Voters)
- business organizations
- ethnic and minority organizations
- local, state, and federal agencies with the capacity to protect your watershed

## Listen Up!

(Source: "Bridge Builder: A Guide for Watershed Partnerships")

Active listening is an invaluable aid in any situation involving communication. The first purpose of active listening is to understand what a person is saying, thinking, and feeling. We have all had experiences in using words which were not really communicating what we were thinking or feeling. And yet it was our thoughts and feelings which we are trying to make another person understand.

The techniques of active listening are strong tools for helping another person find the right words to express his or her thoughts and feelings. Thus, one purpose of the use of these techniques is to help a person be a better communicator, to be understood. In effect, we are providing the chance to influence us, perhaps to change our attitudes and behavior.

The second purpose of active listening is to help a person understand himself/herself better. In the process of explaining thoughts and feelings, aided by the technique of active listening, the person often comes to a better understanding of the problem or issue.

Both of these purposes of active listening are present any time we use these techniques. In using them, we are structuring an atmosphere which provides opportunities for a person to influence the attitudes and behavior of others as well as to take responsibility for altering their own

### **Suggestions for Active Listening**

-Demonstrate interest in what the speaker is saying. Look directly at the speaker and lean slightly in their direction so as to assume a listening pose. Use facial expressions and gestures (nod head) to indicate that you are listening and understand what the other person is trying to put across.

-Be aware of the speaker's feelings as well as words. Watch the speaker's actions and facial expressions.

-Remain neutral. Do not take sides. If two or more members of the group take different views on a subject, be objective and listen for the major ideas on each side. Try to understand where the disagreement really lies. Summarize points of agreement and try to get people involved to reconcile their disagreements. Get other members of the group to help bring about understanding of different points of view, even though reconciliation may be impossible.

-Listen for group consensus. Unanimity, though desirable, is not essential in group discussion. Instead we strive for consensus of the group's thoughts. Summarize the discussion with common elements of agreement, but also recognize adverse opinion which is strongly expressed.

-Avoid personal evaluations. Do not reflect your own opinions with respect to ideas that are brought up in the group. If an idea is to be evaluated, get the group as a whole to make the evaluation.

-Do not be placed on the defensive. Avoid becoming entangled in debates with one or more group members. Keep issues in the group and let the group members settle them amongst themselves. Listen to what is going on and from time to time summarize major points until the real issue is defined.

-Do not be a partial listener. People tend to hear pretty much what they want to hear. Be alert so that your own opinions do not prejudice your listening. Listen for all sides of the issue and be aware of the feelings that are expressed along with the words.

# What Makes Meetings Work

(Source: Prairie Rivers Network)

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Did you join a river conservation group so that you can go to meetings?
2. Are there other demands that are competing for your volunteer time?

Can you see where this is going? Holding non-productive meetings is a momentum killer. You can lose a lot of good volunteers if you hold a series of poorly run meetings.

## **Look for ways to build momentum**

Your organization always should be building momentum. In the early life of the group, or for a specific campaign, this is an especially critical commodity. In the words of organizing sage Saul Alinsky, "Organizations need action as an individual needs oxygen." Leaders need to do their homework prior to a meeting to make sure they don't suck the oxygen out of the organization!

You should have an agenda prepared before the meeting, so that the group can see the progression of the meeting, and help keep the meeting on task and germane to the topic being discussed.

As part of the preparation, think about your objectives for the meeting: what do you want to accomplish and how long will it take to meet these objectives. Note the amount of time allotted to each topic and appoint someone to be keep time and gently, but firmly, remind the leader to move things along. If your meetings are large affairs involving a number of people, you may want to follow Robert's Rules of Order to keep agenda items moving along. Be sure that everyone involved in the meeting is aware of the ground rules and has access to information relevant before your meetings.

Remember what your volunteer members are giving up to be at the meeting. Try to accomplish meaningful tasks so members will feel fulfilled and want to continue to be involved in work of the organization. It is helpful to have concrete actions for members to take, such as signing postcards or writing letters to the editor as the last item of a meeting's agenda.

## **Having Fun**

From what we have mentioned so far, it may seem like fun is out of the question at meetings. Not so! Protecting your river should be fun. To have fun at meetings, be focused, accomplish some meaningful business, so that you have time for an activity. Also plan events, outings, get-togethers that are fun, and don't need an agenda. Cookouts, canoe trips, other outings can help build organizations. One watershed group had the excellent idea of having an educational and fun outing every couple of months in place of their monthly meeting.

If you're able to master creating an agenda and facilitating a meeting that is meaningful, short, and fun, you will have no problem building momentum and will be on your way to building a successful organization.

# Meeting Do's and Don'ts

(Source: "Organizing for Social Change" by Midwest Academy Manual for Activists)

Everyone who participates in meetings has a responsibility to help make them a success. We can't always control others, but we can control ourselves. Below are some dos and don'ts for participating in meetings:

## **Do**

- Personally welcome new people.
- Actively listen to others.
- Support the facilitator in moving the agenda ahead.
- Recommend ways to resolve differences.
- Participate in discussions.
- Encourage new people to speak and volunteer.
- Help set up and clean up the room.
- Be positive and upbeat throughout the meeting.
- Tell a joke or add a light comment to ease the tension in a difficult discussion

## **Don't**

- Dominate the discussion.
- Bring up tangents.
- Dwell on past problems.
- Insist that people support your ideas.
- Gossip about how awful it is.

# Meeting Checklist

(Source: "Organizing for Social Change" by Midwest Academy Manual for Activists)

- Have you set concrete, realistic goals?
- Is the site familiar, accessible, representative, and adequate?
- Are the date and time good for those you want to attend?
- Do you have a chairperson for the meeting? Has the chairperson been involved in preparing the agenda or been fully briefed?
- Do you have translators?
- Does the agenda...
  - Accomplish the goals?
  - Encourage commitment and involvement?
  - Provide visible leadership roles?
  - Let people have fun?
- Do you have...
  - Printed agendas?
  - Background materials?
  - Written proposals for action?
- Have you asked people to serve as the...
  - Chairperson/facilitator?
  - Note taker?
  - Timekeeper?
  - Presenters?
  - Tone setters? (open and close meetings)
  - Greeter? (welcome people and get names and addresses)
  - Refreshment servers?
- Have you considered the following logistical matters?
  - Chair arrangements
  - Flip charts, markers, and masking tape
  - Easel or chalkboard
  - Outlets for audiovisual equipment
  - Sign-in sheets and table
  - Refreshments
  - Microphone setups
  - Translation logistics
- Do you have a turnout plan and enough people working on making turnout calls? Do you have a system for comparing those who say they will come with those who actually come?
- Have you arranged for childcare?
- Do you have transportation for those who need it?

# Public Speaking

(Source: "Organizing for Social Change" by Midwest Academy Manual for Activists)

Unless you are simply giving information to people who don't read, the purpose of a speech is to move people to action. This doesn't necessarily mean exhorting them to storm the Bastille, although that has worked. The activity might be something as everyday as buying a raffle ticket or coming to an annual picnic.

In general, the more immediate and concrete the activity, the easier the speech is to prepare and deliver. Before you prepare your speech, make a decision about the action that people are to take. Construct the speech using that as the goal. Don't be vague. It's not enough to say, "Go home, talk to your neighbors, write your congressperson, and help in any way you can." Tell the neighbors what? Ask them to do what? What should be said to the member of Congress. And just how many letters are needed by when? List three ways that people can help, one of which is always to give money. The purpose of a speech is to produce a result, not just a reaction.

## **Research the Audience**

If there is one single key to success, this is it: Before even researching your topic or sitting down to write, you must know who will be listening. Where do they live and in what kind of houses? What do they do for a living? How old are they? What kinds of families do they have? How much money do they earn? Are they the same as, or different from, the majority of people living in the area, state, or nation? How much school have they attended? What is their race or ethnicity? What has their organization done? In what issues are they interested?

Even if you will be speaking to your own organization in your own community and will already know the answers to most of these questions, think about them anyway. In any situation, start by asking yourself two sets of questions: First, how am I the same as everyone here? What do we all have in common that I can mention in the speech to draw us together? Second, how am I different? Am I the only person who has or hasn't had a job, did or didn't go to college, is or isn't rich, does or doesn't speak with an accent? Are their goals and aspirations and lifestyles the same as mine? Am I taking the same risks that they are? When you call on common experience, make sure it really is common.

When you are speaking to a group outside your own community, gathering this preliminary information is important for both style and content. In addition, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- *Language should be appropriate and geared to the audience's actual vocabulary.* Books, songs, or people quoted must be known to the group.
- *Humor must be tailored to the audience.* Clever wordplay or double entendre, much prized by urban intellectuals, falls flat elsewhere.

- *Even factual information is transmitted differently according to class and region.* Some people don't quote statistics to each other; they tell anecdotes that illustrate, in non-quantitative ways, the point being made. Others expect statistics from unimpeachable authorities.
- *The life experience of the audience matters.* The annual convention of a trade union will be little moved by speeches on the promise of trade unionism; the delegates have been hearing them for many years. The same speech delivered on a picket line or to newly organized workers gets an entirely different reception.
- *The geographic location changes the impact of a speech.* Using the insurance industry as an example of corporate greed goes over well among retirees in West Palm Beach, Florida. It bombs in Jacksonville, headquarters to many insurance companies.
- *Age changes perspective.* Talking about social security to older retired people, people just about to retire, and younger working people requires three different approaches. Within the same generation, the separation of class position can be critical. Financial self-interest issues at a public university are very different from those at a private university.

In summary, the more factual information you have about the audience, the better the speech will be. It even helps to know something of the organizational background of the particular event at which you are speaking. A speaker ought to know what brought this particular audience together. How was the turnout done? Are these the organization's regulars, or did they come off the street in response to a particular crisis? Assume nothing.

Ask about the details of the program. How big is the audience? How long are you expected to speak? What is the rest of the program? It is one matter to be the opening speaker, something else to be on the agenda near the beginning, and a different matter altogether to be the last speaker before dinner. If you are standing between people and their dinner, keep your speech short. While you're asking, find out who else is on the program and what topics they are covering. Are you the only Black or White speaker or the only man or woman in the program? Are you one of five lawyers? Shape your remarks accordingly. Consider what unique contribution you have to offer. For example, if you are speaking at an academic conference and you are the only "practitioner" (person doing real work) on the panel, don't try to give an academic lecture. Rather, focus on your practical experience.

Ask those who know, and ask yourself, what the audience expects you to say. What do they want to hear or hope to hear? Show that you are in tune with this: "I know that you are expecting a talk on sericulture (raising silk worms), and I'm not going to disappoint you." Or "I know that you want to hear more about sericulture. But first allow me to read a poem." More to the point, use this information to strengthen your message: "I know that you all expect me to come before you to urge endorsement of the regular party picket, so you will realize how serious it is when I say that this year, we should not take a position."

# Media Strategy: Advantages and Limitations

(Source: Patagonia "Tools for Grassroots Activists" Conference Materials)

## **Press Releases**

PROS: reaches a wide circulation through print and electronic media

- free publicity
- press coverage lends clout

CONS: not good for a limited/small audience

- may not be the best place for reaching target audience
- time of day (newscast), page article appears on (newspaper), size of article or length of story affect whether audience sees article and its effectiveness

## **Public Service Announcements**

PROS: "free ads" on air

- good tool for public education (counter ads)

CONS: often aired at odd hours (low audience; prime time goes to those who pay)

- if station produces ad, often done in cheapest way
- if you produce PSA it must meet quality standard of station

## **Interview Shows**

PROS: free publicity

- allows you to clarify issues in a more in-depth way (45 minutes vs. a 30 second PSA or short article)
- provides public forum for your issues
- allows you to speak for yourselves, rather than rely on interpretation of reporter

CONS: limited audience

- usually produced cheaply; appeal of "talking heads" limited; many people tune out after a short time

## **Media Packets**

PROS: gives media background information on group and issues

- could lead to more in-depth story

CONS: needs to be updated

## **News Conference**

PROS: calls attention to a situation

- useful for announcing findings, publication of facts, results of studies, clarification of an action, making announcements or demands
- brings out the press, makes an event out of your news

CONS: difficult to find the right time of day to hold so all press can attend and meet that day's deadline

- difficult to get the media to come unless something very important
- could be a lot of effort for little return
- place is crucial

## **Online Social Media**

PROS: free communication

- unlimited space and time (message is available 24/7 from almost any location)

- information can be updated immediately, with little effort

- the option to comment gives all readers a voice and generates discussion

CONS: people must engage themselves with the material, limiting the new audience members

- age and socioeconomic status of the audience limits the reach of internet communication

# Generating a Volunteer Base

(Source: Prairie Rivers Network)

## *How Do We Recruit Volunteers?*

Most river conservation groups are volunteer organizations with no paid staff to do the work of the organization. While a lucky few progress to hiring staff, none can exist or accomplish goals without dedicated volunteers.

Designing a good volunteer program is critical to realizing the vision of your river conservation organization. The volunteer program is also a tool for identifying future leaders for the organization, including committee chairs and board members. Volunteers are also most likely to donate money, and they should be cultivated, as circumstances permit, as potential donors.

## **The Answer To Your Problems: Find Good Volunteers**

Many in watershed groups begin to feel “burnout” or question their effectiveness. Potential burnout victims may repeatedly say, “If I don’t get it done, who will?” The solution is to recruit volunteers to help do the work of the organization. To bring strength to your organizations and the river conservation movement, you need more PEOPLE—in other words, you need to go out and ask for help!

## **Why Do People Volunteer?**

There are as many answers to that question as there are people, but generally volunteers want to feel needed and that their work is important. Self-interest also motivates volunteers—they are altruistic for sure, but they also are interested in fulfilling personal goals or working on problems in places where they have a personal connection (for example, anglers or paddlers who will work for their favorite streams).

Prairie Rivers surveys its volunteers as they begin volunteering as a way to open discussion of their expectations and the expectations of staff. Volunteers are asked to rank in priority eleven value statements about why they volunteer. The statements most frequently in the top five are, in order of occurrence:

1. An opportunity for personal and professional growth
2. Involvement in an issue important to me
3. Development of new skills
4. A chance to make decisions about factors that affect me and the environment
5. A challenging task

Other statements on the survey include values that portray needs of community, personal relationships, recognition, compassionate supervision, and working conditions. Understanding your volunteers’ needs will help develop a long term relationship that will benefit everyone and help further the goal of river conservation.

To develop a long-term relationship with your volunteers, you will need to help them grow into their job with your organization. The Institute for Conservation Leadership has developed a “Leadership Mountain” model for volunteer recruitment. Starting at the bottom, members and public are asked merely to get involved. Then they are asked to increase their participation, their responsibility, their commitment. Each step up the mountain provides opportunity for their personal growth and new service and leadership within the organization.

Leadership  
Mountain  
board members, officers  
committee heads/volunteer leaders  
steady volunteers  
returning volunteers  
first time volunteers  
members/non members

As a leader in your organization, you should help people climb this mountain—to go from by-standers to strong advocates for rivers and streams. This should involve a conscious effort to incrementally increase up the involvement of those with interest and talent, but more on that later.

### **Ask? Not Yet! You Need To Prepare Before You Ask!**

Before you ask anyone to help by being a volunteer, you need to design activities for one-time volunteers and entry level volunteers. These activities should be short-term and well defined. Write task descriptions that include a program-related goal that is interesting, can be repeated frequently, and will not cause enormous headaches if the volunteer fails to show up on a given day. For example, Prairie Rivers Network has an entry level position for media research volunteers. They come in for an hour or two a week to search the web for news reports involving rivers or streams, but it’s not a problem if someone misses a week.

Decide who trains and supervises the volunteer. Be prepared to discuss any barriers to their volunteering, such as transportation, child care, and daily work schedules. For more advanced volunteers, you should design activities that involve longer-term commitments and are program related. These will require some basic training, supervision, and feedback from leadership or staff. Activities should be interesting, rewarding, and utilize the skills and interests of the volunteers. As you match advanced volunteers to jobs, you should also continue to assess entry-level volunteers and encourage their growth so that they will continue to come back. Your ultimate goal is to encourage the development of group leaders and/or board members that take on much more responsibility and have a commitment to the organization’s goals.

### **Some Other Things To Think About**

How do we inform volunteers about potential involvement in our organization? Prairie Rivers Network has developed a volunteer task form that includes the following information to help volunteers do their assigned tasks:

- Task title
- Deadline
- Leader requesting work/person who can help with questions
- Background or big picture as to why the task is important to the organization
- Explain record-keeping requirements for telephone calls, postage usage, etc.
- Provide directions, usually in a step by step manner, clearly written.
- Provide an example if applicable to the task.

### **Asking People for Help**

Asking for new volunteers or members should be a measurable goal in everything your organization does. *So if your group decides to take on an issue, part of your strategy should include asking for new volunteers.* If you are not consciously thinking of how to expand your volunteer base, you are missing an important opportunity to grow your organization.

The outreach element in an organization's plan or a separate campaign should create activities that capture the new or potential volunteers' attention, their contact information, and introduce them to fulfilling volunteer work for rivers and streams.

Credibility and personal relationships are important as you ask for help: it's best to have someone you know and trust ask you for help—but even if people don't have much of a personal relationship with you, they will appreciate being asked for help. With a cold ask you will need to work on building that relationship and credibility, and you may find a new star performer for the group.

### **The Asking Cycle: Ask, Inform, Involve, Thank, and Ask Again**

How do we turn by-standers into river advocates? You use a cycle of repetition.

*Ask, inform, involve, thank, and ask again.*

Of course, the goal is to complete the work at hand, however, creating river conservation leaders for tomorrow and building effective, sustainable organizations should be an ever-present part of your goal, as mentioned above in the section on developing a long term relationship. Leaders must be created—forged by fire—by stepping them up from their first “ask.”

*How do you effectively ask someone for help?*

A simple formula will help design your asking message:

- Personal introduction
- Problem introduction
- Stating the solution
- The request for help

You should prepare before the ask by writing down and perhaps practicing what you will say. The problem introduction should be addressed in an engaging way that will encompass the potential volunteer's self interest. How you define the problem is sometimes referred to as “cutting the issue.”

The solution too, will need to be well thought out. *What action are you asking them to help with? Will it make a difference?* Then, finally, get a firm commitment from the potential volunteer, by asking, “Will you help? Can I see you there?” “Would you like to come out and help? We’d love to have your help and we always have fun.”

Be enthusiastic! It’s contagious, and you shouldn’t feel ashamed about the great work you are doing for your river.

### **Keeping Track of Volunteers**

The key to building good volunteer programs is to keep records on each potential volunteer, their interests and contact information, what you have asked them to do, what they have delivered on, and so on. Develop a database for your volunteer program, track volunteers’ involvement and development, and use this information to develop your volunteers into conservation leaders. There are many ways to track volunteers, but pick one and stick to it. The payoff will be scores of people working together in your organization, furthering the mission of river conservation.

### **Things To Avoid**

Here are some of the don’ts to volunteer management:

- Don't give open ended assignments—define the beginning and end of the task or responsibility.
- Don't skimp on information—volunteers need to know how their donation of time and effort will help.
- Don't forget to define the task well—if there is a misunderstanding you may lose the volunteer if they didn't feel their time was spent on something valuable.
- In the beginning, don't overwhelm the volunteer or take them outside their comfort zone. They will grow from repeated asks.
- Don't rush the relationship building and throw them immediately into the task—Some volunteers are looking for social interaction. Listen to the volunteer's goals and needs, and make them feel welcome in your organization.
- Don't forget to give the volunteer authentic, honest, and constructive feedback.

Frame a problem statement in a way that appeals to the greatest number of people. This will help you gain volunteers, other supporters, and favorable public opinion. For example, if you are working to remove a low-head dam on a river, you should frame the issue broadly by saying that the removal will improve water quality (drinking water preferably if it’s relevant) and fishing and other recreational opportunities. If you framed the issue as one that impacts endangered species in that reach of stream you would not engage as many people however noble the issue.

### *Where Do You Find Them?*

You can find volunteers in many places, and you should try many, if not all of these:

- Have a booth at fairs or other public events
- E-mail requests for help, listserv calls to action, and forum message boards (sometimes from other affiliated organizations)
- Public service announcements or media interviews (what's going on in the community segments)
- Newsletters, brochures, leaflets, church bulletins, and other printed materials

- Organizations such as volunteer centers, schools, community service programs, civic and service organizations, college departments, fraternities and sororities, etc.
- Website announcements, job descriptions, and upcoming events
- By word of mouth.

# Legislation Summaries

## **The Clean Water Act of 1977**

(Source: Prairie Rivers Network)

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) is perhaps the strongest, most effective federal law available to ensure that streams, wetlands, and lakes are protected and restored. One of the important recurring themes throughout the CWA is the importance of meaningful participation on the part of people who know and value local waters. However, the CWA and the regulations adopted to implement it constitute a complicated body of law that can be daunting to most people.

There are many publications that will make the CWA and its programs more accessible to you. Two of them are *The Clean Water Act: An Owner's Manual* and *Permitting an End to Pollution*.

### -The Clean Water Act: An Owner's Manual

This manual, produced by River Network, presents an excellent overview of the CWA and several of its key programs. It can quickly provide you the background information (and vocabulary) to:

- participate in the water pollution control permits, or "NPDES," program to minimize pollution from industries, sewage treatment plants, mining activities, stormwater, etc.
- understand the water quality standards, which set limits on how much pollution a river, lake, or stream can take
- use the watershed restoration planning or "TMDL" program to restore polluted waters in your watershed to fishable and swimmable goals
- use the dredge and fill permits, or "404 permit," program to ensure that wetlands and streams are not unavoidably destroyed
- access funds for projects to control pollution.

The book also provides several examples of how the CWA can be and has been successfully used by people to solve specific problems. Finally, it provides a brief summary of other laws that may be useful in your quest to protect your streams. To order this book, visit [www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org).

### -Permitting an End to Pollution

The handbook, produced by Prairie Rivers Network, River Network, and Clean Water Network, offers much more detail on effective participation in the water pollution control permit (NPDES) program. NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permits are required of almost anyone who would like to dump pollution into any water in the country. There are likely several such "dischargers" in your watershed, who must get an NPDES permit and must renew that permit at least every five years.

There are excellent regulations requiring that NPDES permits only allow minimal pollution that does not make the streams harmful or unattractive for the people, fish, and wildlife that use the stream. However, your participation will be instrumental in ensuring that these regulations achieve their purposes.

To make the best use of this handbook, you will want to begin by:

- finding out what dischargers are currently under an NPDES permit in your watershed (see the Watershed Assessment guidance in this toolkit)

- determining potential problems associated with these discharges
- finding out when those permits are due to expire
- watching for notices that any new or renewed permit is available for public comment

The handbook will then offer excellent instruction on how to use applicable regulations to ensure that the new or renewed permit guarantees that the streams of your watershed are protected. To download this handbook, go to <http://www.prairierivers.org/Projects/CleanWater/Permits.html>

## **IL Groundwater Protection Act of 1987**

(Source: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/groundwater/groundwater-protection/>)

The Illinois Groundwater Protection Act (IGPA) (P.A. 85-0863, 1987) responds to the need to manage groundwater quality by emphasizing a prevention oriented process. The IGPA is a comprehensive law which relies upon a state and local partnership. Although the IGPA is directed toward protection of groundwater as a natural and public resource, special provisions target drinking water wells. The IGPA responds to the need to protect groundwater quality and establishes a unified groundwater protection program by:

- Setting a groundwater protection policy;
- Enhancing cooperation;
- Establishing water well protection zones;
- Providing for surveys, mapping and assessments;
- Establishing authority for recharge area protection;
- Requiring groundwater quality standards; and
- Requiring technology control regulations.

The groundwater policy sets the framework for management of groundwater as a vital resource. The law focuses upon uses of the resource and establishes statewide protection measures directed toward potable water wells. In addition, local governments and citizens are provided an opportunity to perform an important role for groundwater protection in Illinois.

## **Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA)**

(Source: <http://wildlifelaw.unm.edu/fedbook/smcra.html>)

Overview: This Act establishes a program for regulating surface coal mining and reclamation activities. It establishes mandatory uniform standards for these activities on state and federal lands, including a requirement that adverse impacts on fish, wildlife and related environmental values be minimized. The Act creates an Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund for use in reclaiming and restoring land and water resources adversely affected by coal mining practices.

(copied from <http://www.kftc.org/our-work/canary-project/resources/fight-back/smcra>)

Understanding SMCRA: *A quick review of the 1977 federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act*

What SMCRA Promises:

- To protect society & the environment.
- To assure the rights of landowners.

- To prohibit surface mining where reclamation is not possible.
- To assure public participation.

#### Key provisions of SMCRA:

- Sets up the Office of Surface Mining.
- Gives enforcement power to states.
- Establishes Abandoned Mine Lands Fund.
- Requires companies to get mining permits and reclamation bonds.

#### More Provisions of SMCRA:

- Establishes performance standards for reducing environmental and water damage.
- Requires one complete inspection per quarter WITHOUT advance notice.
- Sets up a procedure for declaring lands “unsuitable for mining.”
- Allows for citizen intervention in permit and enforcement decisions.

#### Permit Requirements according to SMCRA:

- Publish notice in local papers.
- File a map showing land to be affected.
- Show effects of mining on quantity and quality of surface and ground water.
- Offer residents a pre-blast survey.
- Submit a blasting plan, reclamation plan and proof of reclamation bond.

#### SMCRA’s Reclamation Promises:

- Requires that reclamation plans restore the land to its prior condition, or to a condition that supports “higher and better uses.”
- Even those “higher and better uses” are only (supposed to be) allowed if they don’t pose a threat to water quality or quantity.

#### Approximate Original Contour Rules:

- Except in a few cases, SMCRA says that reclamation plans must replace the slope to its “approximate original contour.”
- Companies may request a waiver from this rule if they submit “post-mining land use plans” showing that the land will be used for specific, approved purposes.

#### Blasting Requirements:

- The law says companies must “Limit the type of explosives...size, timing and frequency of blasts...to prevent injury to persons, damage to public and private property...and availability of water.”
- Blasting regulations, however, are totally inadequate to do the job.

#### Citizen Participation in SMCRA:

- Any person who has “an interest or may be adversely affected” may object to a mine permit application, revision or bond release.
- Citizen objections follow a 3-step process: informal hearing, formal hearing, lawsuit.
- Citizens may also intervene in “pattern of violations” proceedings and “lands unsuitable”

declarations.

#### Citizen Complaints & Inspection:

- SMCRA allows citizens to request and receive a mine inspection.
- Inspections must be completed by the state within 15 days of the request.
- If not satisfied with the outcome, citizens may request an inspection by the OSM and/or a review by the head of the state agency.
- The OSM must give states “10 days notice.”

#### Abandoned Mine Lands:

- Coal companies pay \$.35 per ton for surface coal (\$.15 for underground coal) into the AML fund to address pre-1977 problems.
- AML money is given back to the states each year for reclamation and water projects.
- More than \$1 billion of unspent AML money sits in Washington D.C.

#### Clean Water Act:

- In addition to SMCRA, coal companies must also comply with the Clean Water Act.
- The CWA says the Corps of Engineers may give permits to fill in waterways IF environmental impacts are minimal and IF the fill is for a specific, useful purpose.
- The Corps violates the CWA by giving permits to bury streams under “valley fills.”

#### Conclusions:

- The law isn't perfect, but it has many strong provisions that should be enforced and obeyed.
- Two of the most important parts of SMCRA are the role for citizen participation and the oversight role of the OSM.