

Communicating Monitoring Results People Can Understand

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Biographical Sketch

Abby manages the outreach group in Tetra Tech's Baltimore office. She has worked in public education, community organizing, training, communication, facilitation, strategic planning, and program development for over 12 years. Abby is an experienced speaker, writer, facilitator and trainer on a wide variety of environmental, organizational and programmatic issues such as non-point source pollution prevention, environmental stewardship, grassroots fundraising, strategic planning, community leadership development, and volunteer environmental monitoring. She serves on the editorial board of the national *Volunteer Monitor* newsletter and has participated in planning and implementing both national volunteer monitoring (since 1992) and NWQMC (since 1998) conferences.

Abstract

The ability to express an idea is as important as the idea itself.

Successful and sustainable environmental protection requires community-based, inclusive, and collaborative solutions. Connecting environmental protection efforts to local realities leads to greater public support and involvement, and ultimately, to more far reaching and sustainable environmental protection. Communication to a wide audience (from elected officials and managers to local citizens) is an integral part of successful environmental protection. However, just because we know it is important doesn't mean we know HOW to communicate.

Developing communication strategies involves setting goals and figuring out how to reach them. In this interactive session we will explore a framework for crafting effective communication strategies. When determining how to communicate monitoring results, we need to ask and answer a series of questions, which, taken together, comprise the building blocks of effective outreach:

- What are our objectives?
- Who are our targeted partners and audiences?
- What is the overall message we want to convey?
- What formats are we going to use to convey the message?
- How will we distribute the product?
- How will we evaluate the success of the strategy(s)?

The workshop will provide an overview of these basic building blocks. Through discussion—and interactive exercises-- participants will have the opportunity to develop and share ideas, as well as develop some of the skills needed, for creating successful communication and outreach strategies.

