How to craft an effective story about the impact of your collaborative conservation efforts

Peer-to-Peer Learning Session notes

Session Host: Aaron Weiss

General session notes

- ~25 attendees
- Large amount of interest from attendees in message boxes
- Interest on improving delivery on a low budget

Key items that came out of discussion

- Careful crafting of stories is essential to avoid shouting in an echo chamber
- Citizen science as a comms tool
- Think before you communicate: goal-oriented communication
    - Identify your audience and what you want from them

Aaron's content

1. Tell your own story
    a. Use the tools available, across different mediums and platforms
        i. Photos: *Everyone* in your organization should be taking more photos, documenting your story
        ii. Audio: Record real people speaking in real voices
        iii. Video: Purchase a cheap tripod, stable video is important. Less than 2:30 is the ideal video length for most situations.
        iv. Text
        v. Data and maps: Story maps are effective for landscape-based stories
2. Be prepared for when someone ELSE wants to tell your story
    a. Who are the best voices to tell your story? Get those people used to talking to reporters.
    b. Reporters don't know what is important. Make sure that you know what the most important pieces are.
        i. Frame your story
        ii. Envision the ideal story and then help them create it
        iii. Have people using 'I' and 'We' – the actual people who did the thing, and have comms staff step aside
    c. Actively pitch reporters
    d. Get ready to talk!
        i. Practice, practice, practice
        ii. Use message boxes to clarify your message
            1. Thesis in the middle
            2. 4 sections around
                a. Problem

             b. Solution

             c. So what? (Audience-oriented, 'make me care')

             d. Benefit

          3. Questions go into one of the boxes and then are brought back to the thesis

      iii. Think through the tough questions

3. Additional tips

    a. Earned media is often going to be better than what you could create yourself, so take advantage of it where possible

    b. Make media accessible for other groups to use: access their distribution networks

    c. Seek opportunities to tie your work to current story threads