BUILDING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

A HANDBOOK FOR MOBILIZING CONSERVATION VOICES

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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ABOUT RESOURCE MEDIA

Resource Media provides communications strategy and media services to nonprofits, foundations and others who are working to protect communities, public health and the environment. We work closely with our partners to craft and implement effective communication strategies designed to reach key audiences and decision makers to build support for sound policies and practices.

Our Services
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Methodology and Acknowledgments

More than a century after President Theodore Roosevelt popularized the concept of conservation, and 40 years after the first Earth Day, Americans share a widespread conservation ethic. Polls consistently reveal strong support for protecting water, air and wildlife. However, translating that ethic to effective policy remains a challenge. One lesson conservationists have learned is they are more likely to succeed when the public voices calling for stronger conservation policy reflect a broad array of people—not a narrow slice of environmentalists, their staffers and attorneys.

Mobilizing a broad voice for conservation is much easier said than done. Resource Media and other communications professionals have been urging conservationists to broaden the face of environmentalism for a decade. We have been impressed by the success of those who have taken this advice to heart and done the hard work of implementing it.

Since success builds success, we wrote this handbook to capture those success stories, glean the most relevant nuggets of wisdom, and share that knowledge with others.

Building Strategic Alliances is a qualitative research project based on systematic and in-depth interviews. First, we sought out the conservation practitioners who have a track record of successfully building partnerships and mobilizing conservation voices. These folks work across a range of conservation missions, from protecting wilderness areas and endangered ecosystems, to finding urban transportation solutions and stopping pollution. Second, we sought out individuals of different constituencies—people who are not usually considered environmentalists, but who have experience working with conservation campaigns. These included ranchers, hunters and anglers, members of ethnic and faith communities, scientists, and health care professionals. We also sought insights from the funding community, both staff of and advisors to grantmaking foundations that deploy philanthropic dollars in support of efforts to broaden the conservation movement.

Working with Kevin Kirchner, a veteran strategic communications consultant who runs Centerpoint Communications, we conducted the interviews, mixed in insights from Resource Media senior staffers, and compiled the lessons learned.

In particular, we thank the Hewlett Foundation for funding this project, and the many people who gave their time in support of this work. The people quoted in this report reflect only a small portion of those who contributed their time and ideas. We greatly appreciate their willingness to do so, and moreover appreciate the smart, hard work they do for land, water, air, wildlife and people.

PART I
Overview

For a decade, Resource Media has helped environmental groups recognize and overcome a fundamental challenge: Earning the trust of the audiences they need to reach in order to succeed. Whether they are reaching out to a skeptical county commission in rural Oregon, taking part in a rough-and-tumble hearing before a Congressional subcommittee, or trying to sway the spending habits of consumers in a global marketplace, building trust is a central element in the conservation equation.

In recent years, some conservation groups made remarkable progress building trust by reaching out to new constituencies and recruiting fresh conservation voices. This practice has value that extends well beyond any given political administration or the latest swing of the political pendulum. Recruiting a broad array of voices—and by extension, building the strategic relationships and alliances required to engage those voices—is key to winning in the short term and gaining credibility in the long term.

Even with the progress of recent years, more needs to be done. In this handbook, *Building Strategic Alliances*, we feature lessons learned by conservationists in the field. Here you will find proven tactics and real life stories combined with a step-by-step approach to help you succeed in your outreach efforts and campaigns.

This handbook is designed for:

1. Conservation groups that want to build strategic alliances with other constituencies, but don't know where to start, have been frustrated by prior attempts, or want to do it better.

2. Conservation funders looking to make sound investments in activities, programs and campaigns that deliver near-term progress toward specific policy goals while strengthening success over the long term.

> *"Our issues are not only environmental issues; they are community issues. And when the community owns it, you win it."*
>
> –Tracy Stone-Manning,
> former Executive Director,
> Clark Fork Coalition

PART II
Broadening Conservation Voices: More Critical Than Ever

A few decades ago, there was no such thing as a full-time environmentalist. People spoke out on environmental issues aside from their regular roles as teachers, scientists, outdoorsmen, farmers, physicians and parents.

That dynamic began to change with the public interest movement that came to life in 1960s and 1970s. This new movement brought landmark successes including ushering in the nation's first comprehensive environmental protection laws. Simultaneously, this movement gave rise to organizations with full-time environmental experts and advocates who worked to meet the public's demand for clean air, water and land.

Despite the victories won by these new organizations, the growing presence of paid, professional staff has revealed a down-side: some people began to view professional environmentalists as just another self-interested special interest, or at least people with whom they shared little in common. That perspective has been aggressively advanced through negative branding campaigns by industries trying to block the policies promoted by public interest groups. Public opinion research over the past years confirms this trend: Over recent decades, American voters have lost trust in government and large institutions. Awash in stories of corrupt special interests and overwhelmed trying to filter myriad sources of information, key blocks of voters are leery of institutions that appear to represent these special interests, including professional environmental organizations.

Rebuilding lost trust presents a substantial challenge and a remarkable opportunity for advancing conservation policies.

During the George W. Bush Administration, building strategic alliances became more important than ever. Between 2000 and 2008, faced with a challenging and even hostile political atmosphere, more and more environmental groups saw the need to build relationships with new constituencies. Recognizing the common ground they shared with diverse members of their communities, and knowing that strong allies make stronger armies, various groups made relationship-building a more explicit part of their daily operations. For example, environmental groups have successfully:

- Partnered with Native Americans, ranchers and hunters to protect the Valle Vidal in northern New Mexico and Montana's Rocky Mountain Front.
- Partnered with farmers, anglers and Native Americans to remove three dams and help restore the Klamath River Basin.
- Partnered with the faith community to protect the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Worked with jewelers like Tiffany & Co. to reform mining law and promote "clean" gold.
- Partnered with budget hawks and taxation watchdogs on everything from fighting nuclear plants to opposing subsidized logging and inefficient transportation systems.

After the 2008 elections, the political winds once again shifted. The White House and Congress were controlled by Democrats, who tend to be more sympathetic to conservation policies than Republicans. More than half the nation's

Governors were Democrats and more than half the state legislatures were controlled by Democrats.

But those who thought a new face and party in the White House would turn opportunities a full 180 degrees were soon proven wrong. Changes came, but proved more incremental.

Efforts to broaden the face of the environmental community should not be dictated by swings in political power. The real purpose is to connect with and represent a broad cross-section of Americans. Making those connections is necessary no matter who is in charge of the White House, Congress or City Hall.

In fact, many Year 1 decisions made by the Obama Administration were far from revolutionary, underscoring the need to continue building a widely engaged conservation movement. These decisions include appointing a centrist Secretary of Interior and Undersecretary of Agriculture, approving the removal of Rocky Mountain wolves from the Endangered Species Act, allowing contested logging to advance in Alaska's Tongass National Forest, and following the Bush Administration's lead regarding Columbia Basin salmon and dams.

Political winds are fickle and tempestuous. In short, building coalitions and broadening conservation voices is fundamental to success, not a luxury that goes in and out of style. It should be done as forethought in any strategy, not as an afterthought.

By partnering with farmers, ranchers, hunters, anglers, ethnic communities, scientists, health professionals, the faith community or other constituencies, conservation groups achieve far more success than going it alone. They can prevent politicians and teams of industry lobbyists from marginalizing environmental issues. More importantly, together they can demonstrate—in a way that polls alone never will—that protecting the environment is a value shared and supported by a broad cross-section of Americans.

In the following pages, we'll walk you through key steps that will help you build new relationships with a broader, more diverse conservation community. We've broken the process down into four phases. Phase one focuses on laying the groundwork for reaching out to new constituencies; this work includes assessing your group's resources, culture and strategies.

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

- Asking a politician to support a policy without demonstrating broad public support is asking for the impossible.
- Building relationships and alliances builds political power. This can help advance an entire conservation agenda, not just win campaigns.
- Budget concerns are real, but limited resources need not be insurmountable obstacles to building strategic relationships.
- Tuning in does not mean caving in. Compromise is often part of political progress, but engaging in strategic partnerships can and should be done without compromising your mission or values.
- Groups that are good at strategic partnerships tend to be the groups with strong leadership development at all levels.

In phase two, we'll tell you about specific steps you can take to get started building relationships with potential partners. Phase three covers communication strategies to help you tell your story to new constituencies, including taking advantage of communication opportunities offered by social networking platforms.

Finally, in phase four we share stories from four different groups that have successfully built new coalitions by using many of the strategies we describe in this handbook.

PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING FUNDAMENTALS

- Listening to your partners—and not trying to micromanage the message and agenda—is essential to fostering a successful relationship.
- Start now. Waiting until the last minute to engage new constituencies is more likely to build resentment than trust.
- Think long-term. Using and discarding partners doesn't build bridges—it burns them.
- Clarity counts. Agreeing on a joint goal or mission statement ensures that everyone is on the same page and is a useful organizing vehicle.
- Share the spotlight. There is a time to grab the microphone and a time to pass it on.

Before reaching out to potential partners, make sure your organization is prepared for the effort involved in building strategic alliances. Take the time to assess your group's resources, internal culture, strategies and goals. The clearer you are about your own organization's abilities and needs, the more success you'll have with mobilizing diverse conservation voices for your cause. The following four steps will put you on the path to productive new partnerships.

STEP 1. ALIGN RESOURCES

Building relationships with other constituencies takes time—and that translates to staff availability and money. While building relationships generally increases the likelihood of success, it can also take time away from other work. Despite budget concerns, successful groups of all sizes put a high priority on strategic alliances, recognizing that investing in building relationships is the most economical strategy in the long run. In fact, some of the experts at relationship building are shoestring organizations who see it as fundamental to their success.

STEP 2. FOSTER AN INTERNAL CULTURE THAT BUILDS BRIDGES

Let's face it: many environmentalists enjoy a good fight. It feels good to speak Truth to Power, to enter a righteous battle against industrial Darth Vaders out to exploit the planet and harm the helpless. Historically, environmentalists canonize individualists and iconoclasts, from Henry Thoreau to Ed Abbey. But of course, the real world is complicated and compromises are required to achieve even the most idealistic goals. Taken too far, an "us-vs-them" culture can prove a serious obstacle to lasting success.

Make an honest assessment of your group's culture. Every conservation group has its own identity. Those that relish the role of being a gadfly or firebrand may have a more difficult time adopting the collaborative approach necessary for relationship-building and new constituencies may feel they are putting other relationships at risk by developing one with you.

Reaching out to new constituencies may push your group outside its comfort zone. Keep in mind that partnering with other constituencies does not mean compromising your organization's mission, goals or priorities. Common ground and shared goals—whether with other environmental groups or other constituencies—are prerequisite to a strong working relationship. A major component of this internal culture boils down to leadership development: cultivating capable people who can represent a group or an issue with a variety of outside audiences and who understand how they fit into overall strategy.

"Real respect does not come from thinking you can 'rent' one of our cowboys as a spokesperson. It requires a partnership based on deeper understanding."

—Kevin Williams,
Western Organization of Resource Councils

STEP 3. MATCH STRATEGIES AND RHETORIC TO BRIDGE-BUILDING GOALS

Conservation groups are judged by their words and deeds. Advocacy tactics such as lawsuits and civil disobedience can be effective and make headlines, but they can also create barriers to building relationships.

On the other hand, litigation or the fear of litigation can provide a catalyst to bring some groups together. Groups can have aggressive litigation strategies and still build bridges to new constituencies, but litigation can make building bridges a greater challenge. Before reaching out to new constituencies, take a hard look at the strategies and rhetoric your group is most known for. Effective groups balance the costs and benefits of all conservation tactics over the long haul.

And even when communicating with your base, be cautious about using extreme or bombastic rhetoric that may alienate more people than it inspires. Well-crafted messages inspire both the base of support and audiences who are closer to the middle of the road.

STEP 4. IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCES FOR INDIVIDUAL GOALS

It's human nature to want to draw attention to one's good work. It's also good business to keep your "customers" (funders, members and other supporters) apprised of your efforts. But good teamwork includes keeping a low profile when warranted. Good strategy involves knowing when to take the spotlight and when to share it.

There is truth to Harry Truman's adage that the folks who get things done are the ones who don't care about getting credit. While taking credit where credit is due is important, that should be secondary to the success of the campaign. Being known as a winning group that delivers results over time will be the best "branding" an organization can hope for. "Organizational ego," including striving to get press attention, impress funders or compete with other conservation groups, is one of the most commonly cited reasons that alliances between environmental groups and non-environmental groups don't work out.

Yet there are countless examples of campaigns, such as the defeat of takings initiatives in Washington and Idaho and the protection of the Wyoming Range, where the key to success was that environmental groups played a supportive role while other constituencies took the lead in public.

When collaborating with other constituencies, develop a sense for when it's appropriate to take the public lead and when prudence calls for a low profile. Sometimes it's strategically advantageous for your group to take the spotlight. Generally, however, your impact will be stronger when it is part of a diverse pro-conservation chorus.

At the same time, keep your key support network—volunteers, supporters, members and funders—up to speed on your alliances and strategic relationships. Use your newsletters, periodic updates and intra-membership communication to explain to your base what you are doing and why. Emphasize the payoff, not the collaboration.

Remember, a good relationship is worth more than a single campaign. We spoke to conservationists who worked on a wilderness campaign for a decade, yet were measured and subdued during public celebrations when the bill passed. That's because they knew the relationships they earned by allowing others to speak would help them advance their next campaign. They dared not risk the appearance of gloating.

Once the groundwork is done, it's time to start building relationships. Political success is built on relationships—the ability to grow and hold together coalitions. And that is the root of mobilizing conservation voices. If your organization wants to broaden the face of conservation—whether as part of your overall mission or on specific projects—the following steps have proven effective.

These tactics are designed to build real relationships and alliances, not Astroturf campaigns. The non-environmental group constituencies are not interested in being "used and then tossed aside" by environmental groups—any more than environmental groups want to be used by others.

STEP 1. CONDUCT A STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Before initiating any outreach to non-environmental group constituencies, conduct a strategic assessment to determine whether building those alliances makes sense and, if so, to identify potential partners. Include these questions in your strategic assessment:

- What are your goals and objectives?
- Who are key decision-makers with the power to make or break those goals and objectives?
- Which demographic constituencies or interest groups have the ear of those decision-makers?
- Do you share goals or worldviews with any of these constituencies?
- Which specific individuals and/or organizations would be willing and able to work, or at least start a conversation with you?
- Does your organization already have a relationship with any of those individuals or organizations or will you need to start from scratch?

STEP 2. FIND COMMON GROUND

When seeking potential partners, look for issues or values where you share common interests. For example, a smart growth group seeking to improve walkways and public parks may find common ground with educators, physicians and church groups seeking to make their hometown safer and healthier for children. Farmers who use river water for irrigation and people who like to fish may share a river-ecology group's concern over, say, invasive aquatic pests. Always remember the first law of strategic communication: *meet people where they are*.

To learn more about an organization's interests and values, look at their website, newsletters, fact sheets, position papers and press clips. Conducting this research helps prioritize your outreach efforts so that you aren't spending time trying to partner with groups that have little

"When reaching out to new constituencies, start with common ground and build up from there."

—James Honey, Sustainable Northwest

or no interest in doing so. It also helps identify bridge issues. Those are the specific shared interests that form the basis of a solid partnership.

Last but not least, doing your homework shows potential partners that you care enough to take the time to learn about what they do.

STEP 3. BREAK THE ICE

There are many ways to open the door to new relationships and the best options depend on circumstances. Some that have worked well for environmental groups are:

- Turning to existing relationships (including your membership, board members, and even spouses of staff) to help create bridges to new constituencies.
- Hiring a staff member who comes from those constituencies or who has pre-existing relationships with those constituencies.

"The key to success is being on the ground, in the communities, developing and building relationships and trust with people and organizations that have a common interest and shared goal. It shows you are part of the community and not outsiders. But it's something that environmental groups don't do enough of."

—Warren Alford, Sierra Forest Legacy

- Retaining consultants who work regularly with those constituencies.
- Putting representatives of some of the constituencies on an Advisory Committee or even on your Board of Directors.
- Getting referrals from individuals or groups with whom those constituencies already have a relationship.
- Identifying members, donors or supporters who are part of those constituencies and asking them to help with the outreach.
- Training staff members so that they are comfortable and confident when they go into meetings with potential partner groups.
- Joining the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club or other civic associations in the communities in which you work. Attending meetings and participating in club activities connects your organization and staff with potential partners and demonstrates that you care about the community.
- Attending or hosting public meetings and forums, and listening intently.

STEP 4. BUILD THE RELATIONSHIPS

Building relationships and strategic alliances takes time. One rancher we spoke to said he got cold stares from some neighbors for years because of his work with conservation groups. Although that chill gradually warmed, it's clear that patience and perseverance are required for this kind of work.

"Don't obsess about trying to build relationships with everyone. Focus on people or organizations that have a direct interest in the same issues and that share a common goal with you."

—Justin Hayes, Idaho Conservation League

It's human nature to trust people who look, act and think like us and distrust those who do not. Until someone knows, likes and trusts you, they aren't likely to partner with you on a project or campaign. It's your job to convince potential partners to look beyond preconceived notions about you and your group so that they will be open to exploring areas of common interest.

Building relationships involves playing up commonalities and playing down differences. It's like going out on a first date—you keep the conversation moving forward by finding common ground.

Fortunately, in many cases initial distrust *can* be overcome. Once you've identified potential partners, done the background research and ensured that there is common ground and a shared goal, you can begin the hard work of building relationships. Here are some of the keys to success:

- **Prioritize.** Relationship-building works best when it is done in the context of a specific policy issue or project that the new constituency already cares about. Make sure there is an obvious connection between the issue or project and the constituency. Don't expect positive results if you ask a rural electric co-op to support an urban wastewater treatment or brownfields reclamation campaign without an obvious link.

"It's real hard work and can take months or years, especially to bridge cultural divides and to build trust."

—Rachel Conn, Amigos Bravos

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR CLEANER WATER

In December 2002, Amigos Bravos, an environmental and social justice organization in New Mexico, initiated the Clean Water Circuit Rider Program. This program assists communities across the state in using the Clean Water Act to restore polluted river systems and deal with future pollution. The Circuit Rider helps local officials, grassroots organizations and the public make sense of the Clean Water Act's complex technical and regulatory language. When communities request assistance, the Circuit Rider meets with interested parties at public meetings to hear local concerns and explains which aspects of the Clean Water Act might be most helpful. Then, in concert with Amigos Bravos' staff, its network of technical and legal resources, and input from the community, the Circuit Rider helps develop and implement an appropriate strategy for addressing the community's issue. The point is, Amigos Bravos didn't go to communities telling them what the problem was; rather, they listened to communities finding where their interests overlapped, then provided resources to help achieve common goals.

"We can't just sign onto anything that comes across our desk. It has to be circulated through the Steering Committee, the science has to be rock solid and it has to be consistent with our issue priorities."

—Lucia Sayre, Bay Area Physicians for Social Responsibility

- **Listen first.** Check your organizational ego and environmental zeal at the door. Listen to their perspective, their interests and goals and the role they are interested in playing. Nothing blows up a potential partnership faster than an environmental group trying to dictate the terms of the relationship—whether it is roles, goals or messages. There's value to that old adage of strategic communication: meet people where they are.

- **Start early.** Reaching out to potential allies and new constituencies should start early in the campaign or even before a specific campaign takes root. Most non-environmental constituencies, like their environmental and conservation group counterparts, have an internal decision-making process that can take weeks or months.

- **Set up face-to-face meetings.** Building relationships with people who don't yet know, like or trust you can't be done from the comfort of your office. Face-to-face contact takes more time, can be more expensive if it involves travel and may push you out of your comfort zone. But it's the only way to do it right.

"It's very difficult to build trust without listening. Environmental groups don't always listen well to the other constituents' needs and desires."

—Jill Lancelot, Taxpayers for Common Sense

"Most environmental groups, especially at the national level, want to control the agenda and message. They see the world through this lens: "We're trying to save the world, so you should help us." And they don't seem to understand that the Latinos and other constituencies are working on lots of their own stuff, too. In addition to clear environmental justice issues, the enviros that have found success among minority groups are those that blended their agenda with ours. Examples include parks, urban greening, urban water conservation and recycling infrastructure and so on."

—Antonio Gonzalez, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project

"You can't just build the relationship with a rancher, a fishing group or anyone else, drop it and expect to be able to come back to them in the future."

—Cat Lazaroff, Defenders of Wildlife

- **Start with small steps.** You might have coffee or lunch with one or two local members of a Rotary Club before addressing the entire board or membership. Being introduced by "one of the family" is a wonderful way to open doors.

- **Connect like-minded people.** When trying to build a relationship with ranchers, you may be more likely to succeed if your organization's spokesperson has a ranching background. Likewise, it's often helpful to have a spokesperson with strong religious convictions meet with the faith community—they are more likely to have a pre-existing affinity and speak the same language. Bottom line: *Match the audience with the spokesperson.*

- **Develop a joint mission or goals statement.** Consider working with your new partners to develop a joint mission or goals statement. This can provide a framework for the partnership throughout the campaign and can serve as an organizing vehicle as the campaign moves forward. (For an example, see the Valle Vidal core values statement on page 22.)

- **Consider setting up a decision-making process to ensure trust and inclusiveness.** In other words, be up front about how decisions are made. For example, decide who has to check off on a press release or op-ed before issuing it to avoid uncomfortable surprises.

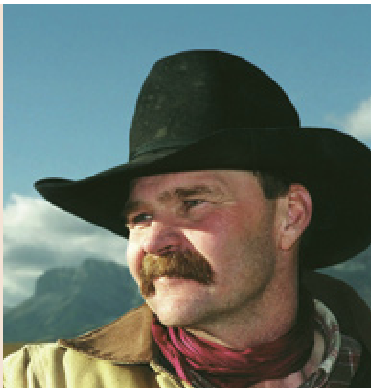
- **Commit to the long term.** Look beyond the specific project or campaign and consider ways to maintain the relationship over time.

- **Don't stray from the common ground.** Bridge issues make teamwork possible. Since you're not going to agree on every issue—even conservation groups don't see eye-to-eye on everything—focus on your bridge issues and stay away from topics that will drive you apart.

- **Give before you get.** Find out what your new partner needs and consider how you can help them get it. You should have some ideas in mind based on your strategic assessment and background research, but it's critical to be flexible based on their views of the issue and on the scope and nature of the relationship.

"Both sides learned a lot from each other, and getting to know individuals was the key. Once you took away the titles and had everyone in the same room, we found that we all wanted the same basic thing—what's best for the land."

—Karl Rappold, Montana Rancher, speaking about the Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front



"If you're meeting with hunters, focus on habitat. While I am a hunter myself, if you are opposed to trophy hunting, keep that to yourself. Work on areas of agreement and avoid subjects that may only serve to divide."

—Scott Hed, Sportsmen's Alliance for Alaska

- **Offer to do the groundwork.** Many of your constituencies won't have the time or skills to do things like writing background materials and developing talking points. You can make it easier for them to participate in the campaign by offering to prepare first drafts. But be sure to give them an opportunity to put anything you write into their own words so that they feel ownership of it.

- **Be willing to stay behind the scenes, if that's the best strategy.** A conservationist may be a great spokesperson for some audiences, but a conversation-stopper for others. You may need to give up some control for the sake of a larger good. *It's better to have a rock-solid spokesperson and a good message than a poor spokesperson and a rock-solid message.* Of course, the goal is to match high credibility with a finely calibrated message.

- **Incrementally expand the comfort zone.** Everyone has a role they are comfortable in. The challenge is to coach spokespeople to push beyond that to be more effective. Start where the spokesperson has total control over the message – say an ad or letter to the editor. After the spokesperson is comfortable with the message and publicity, gradually introduce "speaking roles" such as visits to editorial boards, news conferences or fielding interviews. Be incremental and supportive each step.

- **Start with an easy ask.** Then keep people advancing by incrementally increasing the degree of difficulty. A new spokesperson may be most comfortable with a letter to the editor where they can carefully smith each word. That's fine. Next time, encourage the spokesperson to write an op-ed. Then include them in a two-on-one call with a reporter. Then a conference call. Then have them help lead a news conference or media field tour. At each stage, review the press coverage with them and learn from the process.

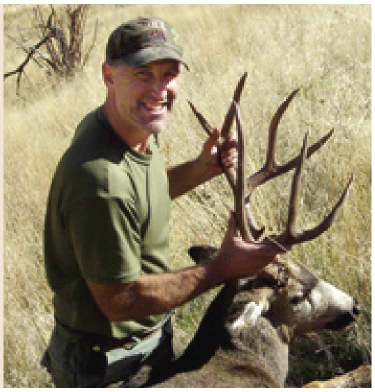
- **Know when to keep your distance.** In some cases, important constituencies can be most effective if they are not publicly aligned with environmental and conservation groups. Even if you have common ground and shared goals, there may be cases when your constituencies will be more effective operating on their own rather than appearing on joint letters and press releases. Groups can work strategically together even if there is no "public display of affection." In some situations, the best thing for professional environmentalists to do is to stay out of the limelight altogether.

"This is very important: Only ask people to talk about their own area of expertise. Don't ask a minister to talk about scientific data or a scientist to talk about faith unless they have a background and expertise in those issues."

—Suellen Lowry, Noah Alliance

"A sign-on letter with just sportsmen's groups alone is far more effective than doing one jointly with mainstream environmental groups."

—Mike Beagle,
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers



STEP 5. SET AND MAINTAIN REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Sound relationships aren't established overnight. If you maintain realistic expectations for the relationship-building process, you'll be less likely to experience frustration when obstacles arise and more likely to succeed in the end.

- **Be patient.** As we've said before, building relationships takes time. For some groups, the initial buy-in is easy, but getting approval on key decisions during the campaign takes much longer. For others, it takes longer to build the relationship and trust on the front end, but once that's in place, work can proceed quickly. Patience is key. The more ambitious the campaign, the more time it will take to develop relationships necessary to succeed.

- **Share message development.** Message control and discipline are essential in any campaign. But don't expect other constituencies to parrot your talking points. Most of them won't do it and they'd be less credible if they did. The primary benefit of partnering with non-environmental constituencies is that they can support the same policy goals from a different perspective. So, work with your partners to put their talking points in the context of their values and the issues they care about.

- **Proceed at the right pace.** Keep in mind that the people and organizations representing other constituencies often face the same kinds of internal and external pressures as you do. For example, a rancher who joins with environmentalists to stop oil and gas drilling might be ostracized by his neighbors. So be sensitive to what you're asking them to do and how long it may take them to do it—especially when it involves taking a public position. In short, don't sacrifice a long-term relationship for a short-term goal.

- **Support their work**. Partnerships are two-way streets. You can't expect other constituencies to be there for your campaigns if you aren't willing to support some of their campaigns. Their issues might not be a priority for your organization, but, in many cases, your issues aren't a priority for them either. It doesn't mean you have to work on all their issues, just as they don't have to work on all of yours. But be open to requests for help.

PART V
Phase Three:
Tell the Story

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FROM SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

When working with your non-environmental group partners, there are many tools for communicating to the media and target audiences. These include press releases, press conferences, action alerts, editorial board meetings and more. This section of the *Building Strategic Alliances* handbook highlights a few of the more innovative communications tactics used by partnerships between environmental groups and other constituencies.

- **Taking to the airwaves.** The Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) has a recording studio in Billings, Mont., from which they produce public service announcements, commentaries and longer-form programs that are made available to radio stations across the West. WORC uses radio to promote understanding and respect for different perspectives and build stronger public relationships.

- **Emphasizing training and coaching of other organizations.** Many organizations invest a great deal of time and resources training their own staff as well as staff from partner constituencies on both the message and working with the media. It's seen as an important part of making sure the non-conservation group partners feel ownership of the talking points. Amigos Bravos' staff went even further by participating in a training session conducted by the Navajo Nation so that they would better understand how American Indians think about and approach their shared issues.

- **Diversifying editorial board voices.** The Greater Yellowstone Coalition conducts mock editorial board visits with its partners. In one case, they connected a business owner, hunter and hiker for a meeting with the local paper. The training session helped participants feel comfortable and confident going into the meeting and it resulted in a strong editorial. That was good for the campaign and it provided positive feedback for the three participants. Seeing their efforts pay off made them more willing to help out in the future.

- **Reaching out directly to policymakers.** The Noah Alliance, a "parachurch" that focuses on conservation, has recruited and trained local scientists, faith leaders and environmentalists for more than 140 in-district meetings with their Congressional representatives. The Alliance provides background materials to the participants, works with them individually to develop talking points, trains them jointly, so that

everyone knows and is comfortable with their respective roles, schedules the meeting with the member of Congress, coordinates all of the meeting logistics and conducts a debriefing sessions afterwards.

- **Building bridges across the country.** The Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) brought environmental leaders from the East Coast to spend a week on working ranches in Montana. Its goal was more to promote understanding and respect for their respective perspectives than to build specific relationships.

BUILDING THE ONLINE CONVERSATION

Social network platforms like Facebook and Twitter offer new ways to communicate with and mobilize constituencies. Web 2.0 platforms allow advocates to tell stories directly to thousands of people, bypassing traditional information gatekeepers such as reporters and editors. They also help feed stories in the mainstream media, as reporters spend more and more time mining blogs for stories and issues to cover.

While social networks may be less useful for establishing an initial relationship with non-environmental constituencies, they can be used to help expand those relationships over time and to leverage those relationships into action. And once a partnership exists, social networking tools can help attract and organize more supporters from all of your constituencies.

Conservationists can use the latest social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter to build strategic new alliances and engage spokespeople in several ways. By and large, groups we investigated had dabbled in social networking media—for example creating "fan pages" on Facebook—but no one felt they had mastered this emerging and rapidly evolving medium. One trend emerged: Just like other communications approaches, succeeding in today's interactive "Web 2.0" environment is not automatic. Success requires savvy and dedicated effort. This must be factored in to the overall budget and campaign plan.

Here are some tips gleaned from our interviews with conservationists who use social networking tools:

- **Find your audience.** Use social networks to find new members of your target audience who are *already* pro-conservation. Recommended networks to start with include the popular and growing Twitter and Facebook platforms. Think of these networks as a virtual farmer's market where you're selling organic goods that you know are popular among a certain percentage of the consumer crowd. You just need to find them and then use the right marketing and positioning so they buy your apples, not the ones at the supermarket.

  - **Facebook:** Use the "search" feature at the top right-hand side of Facebook's user interface and type in an appropriate keyword or keywords. You can also search posts made by friends or everyone on Facebook. Or narrow down results by conducting a sub-search within the "pages" and/or "groups" sections.

  - **Twitter:** At www.Search.Twitter.com, enter keywords to find the most current Twitter conversations. To find potential influencers (those with large followings who more frequently "tweet" about your keyword topic), search for your keywords within www.twellow.com, a yellow pages database of all

Twitter accounts. Or follow "Mr. Tweet" (www.mrtweet.com), a Twitter service that frequently recommends other Twitter users you could connect with. Or search the Hashtags directory (www.hashtags.org) for popular hashtags associated with your keywords that others may be using.

- **Start listening.** Once you've found members with conservation sensibilities, listen to the conversations taking place and observe the virtual culture. What are the conversation trends and tones? Who are the frequently contributing conversation leaders? Who causes controversy or has unpopular opinions? Once you've gotten a feel for the community, participate by showing its members how you can help them. Don't be afraid to ask questions and always provide value by adding helpful ideas and resources to the conversation, such as links to relevant articles or blogs. Focus on building genuine, long-term relationships that can be primed at later times when conservation voices need to be mobilized.

- **Identify spokespeople.** You can also use social networks like Facebook to help identify individual spokespeople to communicate with the mainstream media. For example, the Wilderness Society wanted to promote protecting national forests from off-road vehicle abuse. Resource Media, through our Facebook contacts, noticed a posting from an irate Colorado hiker who had posted images of a mountain meadow trashed by off-road vehicles. Through Facebook, we recruited that hiker and helped translate his experience into a newspaper column.

- **Match your tactics with your target.** Investigate your target decision-makers to determine how much they rely on social media. For example, in a recent campaign in Montana, Resource Media surveyed the media appetites of two key decision-makers: a U.S. Senator and a Congressman. We found the Congressman was "wired"—he was addicted to his BlackBerry and actively fostering Facebook conversations on conservation topics. The Senator, conversely, used traditional media (although presumably his staff was more connected to social media). This suggested different tactics for reaching these two key targets.


USING SOCIAL NETWORKS TO BUILD ALLIANCES

Let's say your organization's cause is saving our world's oceans and enforcing existing protected marine areas. How can you use social networks to mobilize voices to support your cause? After doing searches on keywords like "oceans" and "protection," perhaps you find yourself focusing on two online interest groups that you hadn't been aware of. One is an online community of people interested in sharks and the other is a forum for scuba divers. Both groups have dedicated blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter followers.

When you start listening to these groups' online conversations, you find the former talking about ways to protect sharks and other marine life vital to maintaining the sharks' ecosystems. The latter group discusses coral reefs that are home to exotic fish they like to observe in recreational deep-sea dives. Although these groups have different focuses, you could join their conversations and start building bridges that connect them to each other and to your cause. By tapping into what these groups care about most, you can help them see the correlation between their passions and the need for healthy seas.

Social networks like Facebook foster dynamic, wide-reaching communities that anyone can contribute to. Your messaging in these environments should relate directly to the common interests and values of the groups you are targeting. This could mean finding common ground that both shark lovers and recreational divers can support, such as protecting a particularly beautiful and rare fish species that exists with coral reefs and depends on ecosystems that also support sharks.

Using social networks to recruit pro-conservation voices is very different from paid advertising and needs to be conducted organically and transparently. Appealing to mutual interests and finding common ground will help you build the relationships you need to succeed.

PART VI
Phase Four: Success!

The insights we've offered in this handbook aren't theoretical tactics. They are proven strategies that conservation groups are successfully using to rally new voices in support of their campaigns and goals. The rest of this handbook features four success stories that help bring some of these strategies to life.

- In northern New Mexico, a coalition of diverse voices came together to stop a fast-track drilling proposal from destroying their beloved Valle Vidal. Individuals from non-environmental constituencies took on key leadership and spokesperson roles and the coalition developed a joint values statement that proved to be an effective tool for drawing non-environmental constituencies to the campaign.

- In Bristol Bay, Alaska, native Alaskans and local business leaders started speaking out about a proposal to site a huge open pit mine in the heart of the world's biggest salmon fishery. Before long, these two groups were joined by other constituencies, including fishermen and hunters, to form a powerful coalition of local people who have the most to lose if the mine goes forward.

- In the rural West, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers has grown in five years from seven founding members to 1,200 members in 45 states. While BHA has received informal staff support from environmental groups and some small conservation grants, its remarkable achievements must credited to the compelling voices of its hunter and angler members who use a variety of venues to speak out for preserving wilderness.

- And finally, in the San Francisco Bay area, an unlikely coalition of physicians and farmers have joined forces to bring healthier, tastier food to hospital kitchens, an effort that also supports local family farms and promotes a cleaner environment. The campaign was built on four key organizing strategies described in this handbook: conducting research, building relationships, engaging partners and managing the relationships.

FOCUSING ON SHARED CORE VALUES

Long before New Mexico's Valle Vidal—Spanish for "Valley of Life"—was dedicated as a unit of the Carson National Forest in 1985, it was used by generations of ranchers, Boy Scouts, hunters, anglers, photographers and others attracted by its spectacular beauty and abundant wildlife. So, it was no surprise that these and others joined forces when El Paso Corporation, one of the nation's biggest drilling companies, proposed a massive coalbed methane drilling operation inside Valle Vidal.

What was perhaps surprising was that they prevailed so overwhelmingly. They blocked the Bush Administration's attempt to fast-track the drilling proposal and then got Congress to enact legislation permanently protecting the Valle Vidal from drilling. This is how they did it.

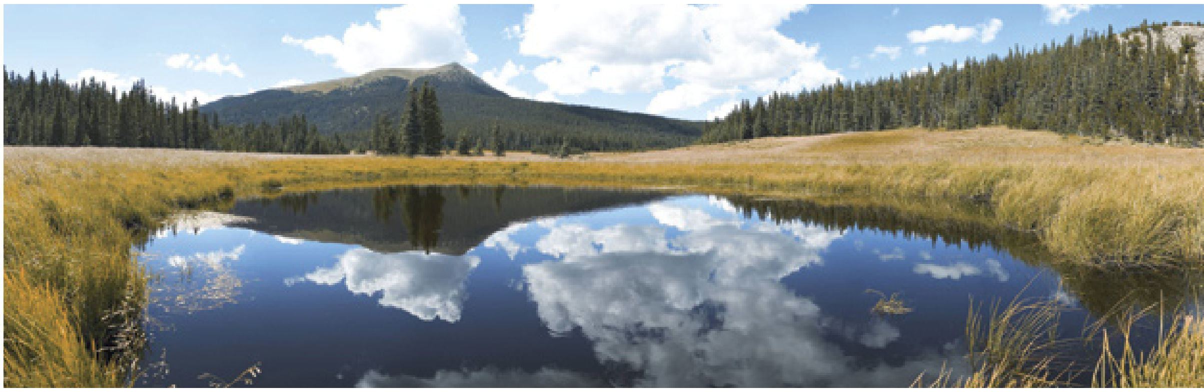
The Coalition for the Valle Vidal was founded by Amigos Bravos and a small number of other partners in 2004. They formed a core executive committee early on to provide leadership, communications, legal, fundraising and organizing capacity. The executive committee proved essential to keeping the campaign organized and moving forward.

It was clear from the start that this would not be a typical environmental protection campaign. Among the initial founders was Alan Lackey, a rancher from Raton who knew the Valle Vidal like the back of his hand. Alan and several other individuals from non-environmental constituencies were given a leadership and key spokesperson role in the Coalition. By coupling non-environmental voices with environmental voices, the Coalition was able to build trust, credibility and receptivity to its messages both in the media and with elected officials at the local, state and federal levels.

The Coalition picked a clear campaign goal—"no leasing/drilling, period"—which provided a rallying point and allowed non-environmental and environmental constituencies to put aside their differences to fight a common enemy. They also developed a core values statement—the work product from a public meeting on the issue—as an organizing tool to engage non-environmental constituencies in the campaign.

The steering committee hired two separate, full-time outreach coordinators—one for sportsmen (Oscar Simpson), and one for everyone else, including local governments (Jim O'Donnell). One of their key duties was to obtain signatories on the core values statement. It was only after they had generated a strong base of local support from ranchers, outfitters, hunters, anglers, local officials and others that they began adding traditional environmental groups as a complement to the campaign.

In short, this was a unified, across-the-board, grassroots upwelling of support for protecting northern New Mexican



CORE VALUES

The Valle Vidal of New Mexico is a national treasure, beloved by sportsmen, ranchers, outfitters and guides, local business, concerned citizens, outdoor enthusiasts and conservation groups. In accord with the Valle Vidal's inherent beauty and value, we believe the following:

- The Valle Vidal's watersheds are of paramount value, and its waters the lifeblood of the land's wildlife and our communities;
- The Valle Vidal is a vital resource to a sustainable future for northern New Mexico's rural and agricultural communities;
- The Valle Vidal provides unique recreational and sporting opportunities for families, hunters, anglers, boy scouts and other outdoor enthusiasts;
- The Valle Vidal provides a home for abundant wildlife populations and holds intrinsic ecological importance and scenic beauty;
- The Valle Vidal should be managed for the benefit of the people—all of the people.

Based on these values, we believe that it is a grave mistake to exploit this special place for the principal benefit of the energy industry. Consequently, the Valle Vidal should be closed to energy leasing and development and thereby protected for the benefit of present and future generations of all Americans.

Endorsed by (as of July 2004):

values. It ultimately included more than 400 businesses, Chambers of Commerce, community groups, local governments and other organizations from around the state.

The Coalition also applied its "local first" organizing approach to its media outreach and the two reinforced one another. Generating stories and editorials in northern New Mexico newspapers helped generate support from northern New Mexico lawmakers. Having the support of northern New Mexico lawmakers helped generate more stories in the local press. That, in turn, led to better press coverage at the state and, later, national level. The core values statement—and the ever growing number of signatories—was a focal point for the Coalition's messaging: "hundreds of local governments, ranchers, sportsmen, businesses and conservationists want the Valle Vidal protected from coalbed methane development."

Many other factors also contributed to the Coalition's success, including:

- Use of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and other legal tools to demonstrate that the Cheney Energy Task Force was pushing to open the Valle Vidal for El Paso Corporation. In so doing, they were also able to tap into local resentment with "outsiders" meddling in New Mexico land issues.
- Convincing Gov. Bill Richardson to support the effort and to use his authority to designate the rivers and streams of the Valle Vidal as an "Outstanding National Resource Water" under the Clean Water Act.
- By late 2006, the broad-based, grassroots momentum built by the Coalition over the prior two years was overpowering and Congress passed the Valle Vidal Protection Act by unanimous consent in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO DEFEND WHAT THEY PRIZE

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an entire community to protect the environment. And that's just what is happening in and around Bristol Bay, Alaska. Native Alaskans, commercial and sport fishermen, and other area business leaders and elected officials have joined together to stop a proposal that would put one of the world's biggest open pit mines—and biggest toxic waste sites—smack in the middle of the world's biggest wild salmon fishery.

Sometimes it's the environmental and conservation groups, those whose primary mission is protecting our land, air and water, that reach out to other constituencies to broaden the face of a campaign or cause. But in Bristol Bay, it was those other constituencies—those who live in the area and have the most at stake if the mine is built—who took the first steps and are leading the fight against the Pebble Mine.

The proposed Pebble Mine would sit in the shadow of Lake Clark and Katmai National Parks and in the headwaters of Bristol Bay, an area where wild salmon runs and other renewable natural resources contribute more than $400 million a year to Alaska's economy. The area is also home to many Alaskan Native tribes whose families have depended on its bounty for subsistence hunting and fishing for countless generations.

> *"I can't imagine a worse location for a mine of this type unless it was in my kitchen."*
>
> —Former Alaska Gov. Jay Hammond

According to documents filed with the State of Alaska by its proponents, Pebble Mine would rip relatively low-grade gold, copper and molybdenum from a massive open-pit mine that, including related facilities, would cover 30 square miles and fill nearby valleys and lakes with more than 2.5 billion tons of toxic mining waste behind five gigantic earthen dams. To make matters worse, the mine area sits right on top of one of Alaska's most active earthquake zones.

The Pebble Mine was little more than a twinkle in developers' eyes for most of the past 25 years. But things started getting serious in 2002 when Canadian upstart Northern Dynasty Minerals, which acquired the Pebble claims a year earlier, began exploring the site in earnest. Though the state lands on which the mine would be located had been zoned for wildlife habitat since 1984, the state changed that classification to "mineral lands" in 2005. As

importantly, Northern Dynasty's mining claims were in-holdings within areas selected by Native Alaskans under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

It was Northern Dynasty's initiation of serious exploration in 2002 that jump-started local opposition to the mine. In 2003, eight Bristol Bay area Native corporations began meeting to discuss the impacts of the proposed mine on subsistence hunting and fishing. For the first several years, they operated under a joint memorandum of understanding. When that proved too unwieldy, they formed Nunamta Aulukestai, which means "Caretakers of the Land" in Yup'ik, a nonprofit organization whose board of directors includes representatives of each of the eight village corporations.

Local businesses that promote and serve the region's unparalleled sport and commercial fishing industries also got together when Northern Dynasty began its mining exploration and, in 2005, formed the Renewable Resources Coalition "to preserve and protect the ongoing viability of Alaska's abundant fishing and hunting resources and the lands and waters they need to survive."

Both groups worked closely with organizations like Alaskans for Responsible Mining, Trout Unlimited and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. In 2007, Nunamta Aulukestai, the Renewable Resources Coalition and a handful of other groups and individuals formed the Bristol Bay Working Group, a loose umbrella organization to better coordinate and communicate about their respective efforts to stop the Pebble Mine.

While the campaign to protect Bristol Bay and stop the Pebble Mine is still in its early stages—the mining companies are not expected to file their development plans until sometime in 2010—the efforts of the Renewable Resources Coalition, Nunamta Aulukestai, the Bristol Bay Working Group and others have made significant progress in educating Alaskans about the disastrous impacts of the mine. That's no small feat in a state that has rarely seen a mine that it didn't embrace. Moreover, Bristol Bay area residents now oppose the mine by more than a 4:1 margin.

Some of the tactics being used by the groups include:

- **Public education**—communicating with Alaskans both through direct outreach and through the media.
- **Organizing**—generating resolutions in opposition to the mine from affected organizations and communities.
- **Legislation**—working with state legislators to ensure protection of the Bristol Bay watershed.
- **Litigation**—ensuring that state agencies and the mine's proponents fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing public participation and protection of the state's lands and natural resources.
- **Corporate responsibility**—educating jewelers about the impacts of the Pebble Mine, and educating chefs and consumers about the importance of Bristol Bay for wild salmon.

This campaign was neither initiated nor implemented by environmental groups—and that is critically important in a state where environmental groups, especially those from outside, are often viewed as the enemy. This is a campaign whose roots are planted firmly among those who have the most to lose if the Pebble Mine goes forward, although the resolutions, press releases, lawsuits and legislation are all critically important elements of the campaign. The following letter to the editor from Petla Noden, a Yup'ik Native from Curyung (Dillingham), sums up not just what's at stake, but why the voices of these constituencies are the key to success.

My Letter to the Editor by Petla Noden July 13, 2009 Page 1

Waqaa. Hello. Quyana, thank you, for hearing the message I bring to you today. I am a Yup'ik Native from Curyung, "the town of Dillingham" in Bristol Bay. My Yup'ik name is Puciqaq, and my English American name is Petla Noden.

I am here today to speak the truth about the importance of protecting the land and rivers that give us life. More specifically, I am here to talk about the importance of protecting Bristol Bay against the threat posed by the proposed Pebble Mine. To speak the truth of this matter to you, I must first speak to you about my family.

I am the youngest of five children born to Mary Ann and Danny Noden. My mom is from Portage Creek, a small fishing village located up the Nushagak River that sits below Ekwok, New Stuyahok and Koliganek. My dad is from Snag Point, now called Dillingham, which is located at the mouth of the Nushagak, a river that drains into Bristol Bay. I have three sisters, a brother, eight nephews and two nieces. We are all very close and love each other very much, along with all our close relatives. Our lives are woven together through our subsistence lifestyle.

Ever since I can remember, we have been working with fish—catching fish, cleaning fish, cutting fish, hanging fish, smoking fish, frying fish, canning fish, drying fish, baking fish, salting fish, pickling fish, fermenting fish, freezing fish, boiling fish—and never running out of seal oil. We never had much money growing up, but our freezer was always packed with moose, caribou, fish, ducks, geese, beaver, porcupine, blueberries, salmon berries, cranberries, blackberries, special plants and other vegetation used for aqutak, soups, teas and medicine.

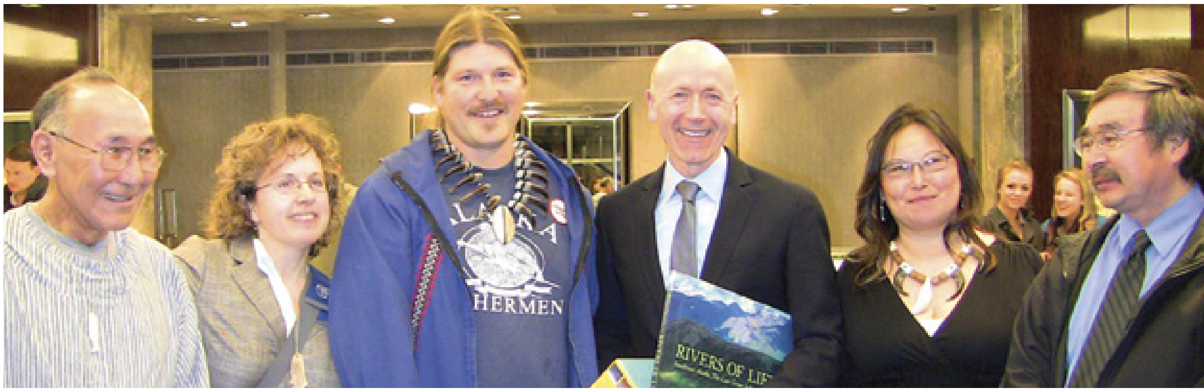
There were times growing up, when some of the kids would tease us because we didn't have a lot of money, and they would call us poor. And I believed them. But looking back today, I know they were wrong. We never did run out of fish. Not once. We always had fish. And it was always soooo good, even though we had it just about every night.

Some of my fondest thoughts are of those days when relatives come over to have tea and visit and the whole family sits around the table, for no other reason but to eat Native foods and tell stories. The most memorable joy in my childhood was sitting with my family and our relatives listening to the stories of hunting or fishing or just funny stories of the past and eating our Native foods with plenty of seal oil.

The truth is that hunting, fishing, and gathering from the land and rivers, is our identity as a people. It is who we are. It is our way of life. The land and rivers are always ready to give us what we need to survive, regardless of the season. In the spring we have fresh ducks and geese. In the summer we have fresh fish, moose and berries. In the fall we have walrus. In the winter we go caribou hunting and ice fishing. The land and rivers love and nourish us and we must return the favor.

To me, the earth is a living organism. The earth has created every living thing under the sun. The earth is 70 percent water—just like our bodies. It breathes in and out once a year with the seasons. The rivers and streams are the arteries and capillaries of the earth. The Bristol Bay nourishes the Nushagak and Kvichak, the plants and animals and the people with fish and clean water, the way a vein nourishes a portion of the body with much needed oxygen and nutrients.

As a people, we have no choice but to stand up and protect our land and our rivers. Good, clean water is the very foundation of all my people and of the plants and animals of Bristol Bay. Every living thing on this planet requires good, clean water.



My Letter to the Editor by Petla Noden, continued **Page 2**

But the Pebble Partnership plans to dig the largest hole in North America, sucking the salmon streams dry at the headwaters of the two most productive salmon spawning streams on planet earth: the Koktuli and Upper Talarik, which drain into the Nushagak and Kvichak Rivers. According to an October 2004 report from Northern Dynasty Minerals, Inc., which is one of two corporations involved in the Pebble Partnership, building the mine would most likely necessitate construction of a toxic tailings lagoon covering almost 20 square miles.

According to a Sept. 2007 article in the *LA Times*, getting at the relatively low-grade deposits of gold, copper and molybdenum necessitates the removal of 12 billion tons of dirt. This simple mechanical, non-chemical process alone would expose sulfides in the earth to air and water making sulfuric acid.

In addition to this, the proposed Pebble Mine has the potential to release release arsenic, cyanide and heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, zinc and mercury, which kill fish and can cause human health problems such as cancer and neurological damage.

The threat to our subsistence and our people in the coming years alone is too much to risk if the Pebble Mine is built. But who will be responsible for taking care of this toxic mess 75 years in the future when our grandchildren are reaching adulthood and the Pebble Partnership has exploited the land to its last ounce of metal, and left?

We are responsible for preventing this toxic mess from happening now for the sake of our grandchildren and future generations. The proposed Pebble Mine threatens our clean water, our plants and animals, our rivers and streams—our whole ecosystem and way of life.

Anglo American and Northern Dynasty, which are the British and Canadian companies in the Pebble Partnership, make promises and a handful of jobs, hand out money and make more promises while they try to convince us that red is blue. But if we allow them to go forward with their plan, we will be left with nothing but a big hole in the earth that you can see from space. No more fish, ducks, geese, moose, caribou or aquatic life. Nothing but a big hole in the ground and a toxic lake that nothing can survive in. Then the mining companies will be gone out of state, counting their money and destroying more land and rivers. These mining companies must be stopped. We have to take the right steps to stop these foreign mining companies before it's too late.

There is too much going on today already—what with global warming, warming of the oceans and the dangers of global pollutants in the oceans—for us to pose greater risk to the earth's last great fisheries. We can't risk destroying our land and rivers that created us—not for money, not for jobs. It is said that this earth does not belong to us, we belong to this earth. We are the children of the earth. We cannot turn around and stab it in the heart.

Allowing the Pebble Partnership to go through with their plans would be giving the earth a cancerous tumor, a deadly disease of the land and rivers that would affect everything in the food chain, from small insects that juvenile salmon eat, to bears that eat the salmon and everything else.

Please join me in my fight against Pebble. Our future and the fate of Bristol Bay depends on the decisions we make today. Let's ensure that our grandchildren's grandchildren can live happy and healthy lives here in the great land. Quyanaqfaah! And thank you very much!

HELPING ORGANIZE A KEY CONSTITUENCY

In the rural West, hunting and fishing are integral parts of the social fabric. Historically, hunters like Theodore Roosevelt and Aldo Leopold led the fight to protect America's wilderness. But in recent decades, hunter/angler support for wilderness has waned and even turned into resistance.

In 2004, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers formed around an Oregon campfire to reclaim that sportsmen's wilderness heritage. Over the next five years, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers grew from seven founding members to 1,200 members in 45 states. BHA has become a nationally recognized voice for preserving large blocks of habitat, but it faces significant growing pains as it seeks its path.

Nonetheless, BHA reflects how a neglected constituency can be organized into an effective force, harnessing passionate voices that were previously silent.

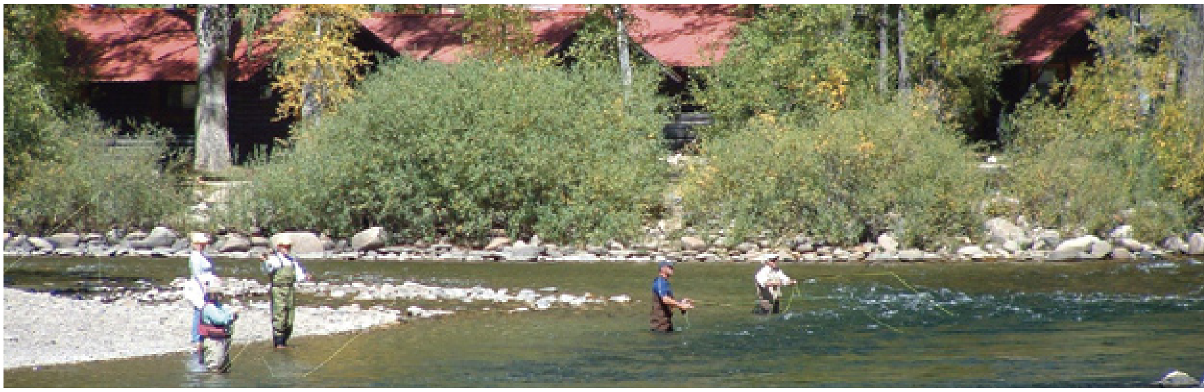
There are many sportsmen's conservation groups, each with its own niche. For example, Trout Unlimited focuses on conserving coldwater fisheries and Ducks Unlimited protects wetlands. BHA's niche evolved to be protecting large pieces of wildlife habitat, including wilderness and roadless areas, and stopping the abuse of public land by off-road vehicles. This narrow focus allows it to take a stronger stand on controversial topics than other, more broadly defined organizations.

As Ken Rait, campaign director of Campaign for America's Wilderness said, "The success or failure of the wilderness movement in the northern Rockies is significantly bolstered by Backcountry Hunters & Anglers."

BHA members from across the country have spoken out for preserving wilderness in a variety of venues, from letters to the editor, to meeting with agency officials and local elected officials, to tabling at sportsmen's conventions. In 2007, *Field & Stream Magazine* named BHA member Brian Maguire its Conservation Hero for fighting to protect Oregon's Mount Hood Wilderness. BHA members provided sportsmen's voices for protecting the Wild Sky Wilderness in Washington, protecting the Oregon Cascades from BLM logging, and working to conserve Idaho's Clearwater country, Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, the Wyoming Range and Colorado's roadless areas. BHA members spoke up against ATV abuse in New Mexico, California, Pennsylvania and beyond.

This all came at very little cost to their green partners. BHA has received informal staff support from Trout Unlimited, Resource Media and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and a few conservation grants of $10,000 to $15,000. In fact, larger conservation groups have hired BHA volunteers as professional field organizers.

Founding BHA Chairman Mike Beagle, who now works for Trout Unlimited in Oregon, says it is important for BHA to maintain an independent sportsmen's voice, so it is not dismissed as "too green." For example, BHA avoids signing on letters with green groups, but frequently spearheads conservation sign-on letters from outfitters, taxidermists and hook-and-bullet groups. While BHA speaks to ecological values, it does so through the prism of protecting important fishing waters and game habitat.



And when it comes to educating members of Congress, other elected officials or their staff about wilderness and backcountry issues, BHA believes it's important that they hear about it from the hunters and anglers who spend time out there. Hearing a pro-backcountry message from hunters and anglers makes a real impact on those decision-makers because it is coming from people who are generally more conservative than environmentalists or other backcountry advocates.

BHA has a potential to be a much more effective voice for conservation, particularly in Western, conservative and rural regions where hunting and fishing are part of the cultural fabric. However, BHA faces serious hurdles. It rides on the shoulders of volunteers who have limited time, energy and expertise to build BHA to its potential. The group's leaders believe the organization has substantial room for growth, but that growing numbers puts increasing pressure on the core of dedicated volunteers. It is raising funds to meet that challenge.

[Disclosure: Building Strategic Alliances co-author Ben Long serves on the board of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.]

HOSPITAL FOOD

It doesn't matter if you're a patient, visiting a patient or on staff. Eating hospital food has a reputation that's on par with going to the dentist or using a Porta-Potty: Sometimes you just have to do it—but you'd rather not.

It's good to know, though, that for the past five years, San Francisco Bay Area Physicians for Social Responsibility (SFPSR) and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) have been working to do something about it.

SFPSR starts from the premise that food purchasing decisions made by large institutions like hospitals and other health care facilities "not only affect the health of the people consuming food in their facilities, [but] can have a profound effect on the environment and the direction of U.S. agricultural practices." When health care facilities buy fresh, locally grown meats, fruits, vegetables and dairy products from farms using ecologically sound practices, they are providing healthier, tastier food while promoting a cleaner environment and supporting the local economy.

Meanwhile, CAFF has been working with school nutrition directors for more than a decade to get healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables into California school cafeterias. So, it was only natural for CAFF to agree to work with SFPSR on its Healthier Foods in Health Care campaign.

Natural, perhaps, but getting big health care facilities that are used to buying most of their food from a single food distributor to agree to buy from local farmers isn't easy. Nor is it easy to find enough local, sustainably grown and raised products to meet the needs of those large institutions.

Although its Healthier Food in Health Care campaign operates in the marketplace rather than in a legislative or public policy arena, the same organizing and outreach tools that are fundamental in other coalition efforts were the key to success for SFPSR here as well. In fact, they adopted a straight-up community organizing approach from the start, with four key elements:

1. **Research:** learning about the industry and identifying the key stakeholders.
2. **Relationship Building:** getting to know the key stakeholders and earning their trust.
3. **Engaging the Partners:** having a menu of simple, easy things the partners can do and expanding from there as the relationship develops.
4. **Maintaining the Relationship:** setting up an ongoing mechanism for information sharing and engagement among the partners.

RESEARCH

While SFPSR had extensive relationships with health professionals in the Bay Area, they didn't have any real background with the hospital food industry. So the first step was conducting extensive research, including:

- Identifying the stakeholders—food suppliers (farmers; ranchers; distribution companies like Sysco and US Foods), food purchasers (food service directors at the hospitals), and public health professionals; and

- Learning about the different models for purchasing and preparing food, which included contracting and procurement, menu development, and marketing.

Getting to know the ins and outs of both the hospital food service industry and the sustainable farming community in northern California was essential to overcoming the legal, logistical and institutional barriers to getting healthy, local, sustainable grown and raised foods onto the menus at Bay Area hospitals.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Once they had identified the key stakeholders, SFPSR began meeting with food service directors and other hospital administrators at the larger facilities in the area. Not only did it help SFPSR learn about the hospital food industry, but building personal relationships and trust with the food service directors was essential to moving forward with the program. Moreover, according to Co-Director Lucia Sayre, those meetings had to be done in person, not through phone calls or email, because at the beginning the food service directors didn't know anything about SFPSR. The only way to get to know them and earn their trust was through face-to-face meetings to talk about what the hospitals were doing and how local sourcing would help.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

One of the potential barriers to getting locally sourced meats, produce and dairy products onto hospital menus is procurement contracts with the big food distributors like U.S. Foods and Sysco. Those contracts typically require the hospitals to purchase at least 85 percent of their food through the distributor. SFPSR now works with the hospital food service directors to get language into those contracts specifying certain amounts of locally sourced, sustainably produced food. If the distributor can't provide it, the hospital is able to seek it from other sources irrespective of any other minimum food purchase requirements in the distributor's contract.

Similarly, SFPSR didn't have any relationships with farmers and ranchers in northern California. Nor did it have the time or resources to build and develop those relationships individually. Enter CAFF and its 26 years of working in California's agriculture community. By working with CAFF, SFPSR was able to identify local sources of sustainably grown and raised meats, fruits, vegetables and dairy products that could be made available to the hospitals—within the hospitals' existing budgets.

ENGAGING THE PARTNERS

In most large businesses, organizations or bureaucracies, there is resistance to change. So, it is not surprising that, initially, many of the hospital food service directors felt like they were going out on a limb if they pushed for locally sourced, sustainably grown foods. That is why SFPSR and CAFF developed a menu of simple, easy-to-implement options from which the food service directors could choose. Things like:

- Signing the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge (see below). The Pledge is a centerpiece of Health Care Without Harm's national Healthy Food in Health Care campaign, for which SFPSR is the lead California organizer. More than 250 health care facilities in the United States have signed the pledge, including these 15 in California:
    1. Bakersfield Memorial Hospital
    2. Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian
    3. John Muir Health System
    4. John Muir Health, Concord Campus
    5. John Muir Health, Walnut Creek Campus
    6. John Muir Behavioral Health Center
    7. Kaiser Permanente
    8. Sharp Coronado Hospital
    9. St. Joseph Health System
    10. Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital
    11. Petaluma Valley Hospital
    12. St. Jude Medical Center
    13. St. Joseph Hospital
    14. St. Mary Medical Center
    15. UCSF Medical Center
- Buying hormone- and antibiotic-free milk.
- Committing to buying 10 percent of its produce from local farms that use ecologically sustainable practices.
- Promoting the hospital's commitment to include sustainable, local foods in its patient meals and cafeterias through tray cards, menus and point of purchase signs. Both CAFF and SFPSR help the hospitals with those promotional materials.

Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge

This Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge is a framework that outlines steps to be taken by the health care industry to improve the health of patients, communities and the environment.

As a responsible provider of health care services, we are committed to the health of our patients, our staff and the local and global community. We are aware that food production and distribution methods can have adverse impacts on public environmental health. As a result, we recognize that for the consumers who eat it, the workers who produce it and the ecosystems that sustain us, healthy food must be defined not only by nutritional quality, but equally by a food system that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and supportive of human dignity and justice. We are committed to the goal of providing local, nutritious and sustainable food.

Specifically, we are committed to the following healthy food in health care measures for our institution. We pledge to:

Increase our offering of fruit and vegetables, nutritionally dense and minimally processed, unrefined foods and reduce unhealthy (trans and saturated) fats and sweetened foods.

Implement a stepwise program to identify and adopt sustainable food procurement. Begin where fewer barriers exist and immediate steps can be taken, such as the adoption of rBGH free milk, fair trade coffee, or selections of organic and/or local fresh produce in the cafeteria.

Work with local farmers, community-based organizations and food suppliers to increase the availability of fresh, locally-produced food.

Encourage our vendors and/or food management companies to supply us with food that is produced in systems that, among other attributes, eliminate the use of toxic pesticides, prohibit the use of hormones and non-therapeutic antibiotics, support farmer and farm worker health and welfare, and use ecologically protective and restorative agriculture.

Communicate to our Group Purchasing Organizations our interest in foods whose source and production practices (i.e. protect biodiversity, antibiotic and hormone use, local, pesticide use, etc) are identified, so that we may have informed consent and choice about the foods we purchase.

Develop a program to promote and source from producers and processors which uphold the dignity of family, farmers, workers and their communities and support sustainable and humane agriculture systems.

Educate and communicate within our system and with our patients and community about our nutritious, socially just and ecologically sustainable healthy food practices and procedures.

Minimize and beneficially reuse food waste and support the use of food packaging and products that are ecologically protective.

Report annually on implementation of this Pledge.

Name: ______________________ Title: ______________________

On behalf of (indicate your department, facility or system): ______________________

Address: ______________________

City: ______________________ State: __________ Zip: __________

Phone: ______________________ Email: ______________________

Signature: ______________________ Date: __________

❍ Please send me a clean copy of the pledge with signature line only. We would like to have it framed and displayed.

To submit your pledge this form should be faxed or mailed to Health Care Without Harm:
HCWH • Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge • 1901 N. Moore Street, Suite 509 • Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: 703-243-0056 • Fax: 703-243-4008 • www.NoHarm.org

Health Care Without Harm

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