

Building Conservation Leadership

Workshop 2: “Friendraising”: Cultivating Broader Support in Your Community

Presenters: Ginny Callan, Debby Hinman

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Ginny Callan’s lecture entitled, “‘Friendraising:’ Cultivating Broader Support in Your Community,” focused on the importance of having broad community support for an organization to be successful. First, workshop attendees introduced themselves and described what projects their groups were currently working on. Ginny went on to mention Malcolm Gladwell’s *The Tipping Point*, which describes three types of people that are crucial to “friendraising”: mavens, who gather lots of information; connectors, who link well with lots of people; and salespeople, who are natural people-magnets. He also discusses four personalities of change makers: rebel, change agent, citizen, and reformer, each of which have characteristics that make them both effective and ineffective.

Ginny then asked attendees to brainstorm different constituencies in their communities that they could reach out to. She brought up two examples of groups that have been very successful in “friendraising” – Save Our Groundwater in southern New Hampshire, and Green Decade in Newton, MA. Exchanging ideas with other groups and constituencies can lead to further collaboration. When presenting at other groups’ meetings, it is important to focus the topic on issues of interest and be interactive/encourage the attendees to get involved in the meeting. Ginny spoke of the partnership between Bike Boston, Walk Boston, and several health groups, which advocate together for better and safer paths in Boston.

Next, Ginny moved on to the basics of maintaining your group. She listed some important components of meetings, including sticking to an agenda and encouraging everyone’s participation. She stressed the importance of a convenient and familiar meeting site. Also important is the development of leadership through delegation, titles, and recognition of members. Participants then shared outreach activities they had done in their communities. Lastly, attendees were asked to share any new ideas they had gotten from the workshop.

Debby Hinman of the Cold River Local Advisory Committee (CRLAC) discussed her experiences in “friendraising.” She stressed the importance of broad community support in her organization’s success. She talked about how CRLAC talked with many community members

and officials. She also discussed CRLAC's involvement with community schools and projects around the watershed. Debby then gave the attendees suggestions on activities to involve community members more. She also noted that email has been her most effective method of communicating with the community.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

I. Introduction: Ginny Callan/New England Grassroots Environment Fund

- A. NEGEF is a small grants program w/ 3 rounds a year
- B. Ginny invited phone calls with possible project ideas

II. Introductions/Current Projects

- Grafton PB (Clara Steck):** no grassroots
- Bradford CC (Nancy Jones):** natural resources inventory
- Lyme CC (Lee Larson):** assessing level of one of the ponds due to beaver activity, hydrologic study of area
- Upper Valley Trails Alliance (Susan Simmers):** provides resources to many CCs
- Plainfield CC (David Grobe):** NH Forest Society land acquisition pending
- Orford CC (Bry Beeson):** building CC, town given 11 acre parcel
- Cornish CC (Mary Beth Heiskell):** working on town forest
- Hartland CC (Deb Jones):** invasives control, green-up days, inventory of class 4 roads
- Hartford CC (Karen Douville):** shoreline regulations
- West Windsor CC (Bob Gray):** trail easements, landowner outreach
- Norwich CC (Lee Michaelides):** trail workshops, watershed study
- Strafford CC (Anne Peyton):** geomorphic assessment of Ompompanoosuc River; selling Liberty elms in town for fundraiser
- Reading CC (Web Coleman):** new Commission forming
- Mascoma Watershed Conservation Council (Kurt Gotthardt):** land management, natural resource inventory
- Lebanon CC (Judy Macnab):** Open Space committee – drafting Open Space Plan
- Haverhill CC (Nancy Leitner):** new Commission
- Weathersfield Land Preservation Association (Steve Aikenhead):** new organization
- Woodstock (Steve Carter):** wetlands inventory, incorporate biodiversity info into long-range planning
- Goshen (Bard Flanders):** working on conflict with state gov't and dispute over land going to Okemo Ski Area
- Royalton CC (Patrick Dakin):** drawing up a management plan for a town-owned parcel
- East Montpelier (Ginny Callan):** town forest/wetland – conservation easements, master plan update, water resources planning

III. Fundraising/Organizing Your Community

- A. Attracting a wider group and engaging others
 - 1. handout: “Eight Stages of the Process of Social Movement Success” by Bill Moyer
 - 2. Three types of people: *The Tipping Point* by Malcom Gladwell
 - maven – gatherer of information, likes sharing info, uses wealth of info in a human way, knows what’s going on and who is the best person to talk to in your town
 - connectors – know lots of people, connect with them repeatedly, remember names well, keyed into people, can help link you with the right people

- salespeople – outgoing, positive, people are drawn to them. Make other people around them feel good, bring people along with them
- Try to have all these types represented in your group.

3. Four personality types of changemakers (see handout)

- rebel
- change agent
- citizen
- reformer

4. Brainstorm: Identify constituencies/interest groups in your community

- “good old boys club”
- senior citizens luncheons
- jocks/ recreation program people
- snowmobilers, FAST
- former town officials
- active town officials
- historical society
- schools
- volunteer fire depts.
- hunters/fishermen
- Lions and other service clubs
- loggers
- health groups/organizations
- seniors – often have more free time
- student groups
- businesses
- Co-op buying club
- garden clubs

5. Action Plan:

- go to these constituencies and present at their meetings
- ask them for help and be specific on what they should do!
- get invited to lunches eg Lions club – great way to network; adjust topic, focus, make it interesting – get them to interact and get involved

6. Examples:

- Save Our Groundwater (in NH): amazing outreach effort in community
 - invite media, legislature, town selectboard, mailing list
 - events: adopted by highway where bottling plant supposed to be (USA Springs)
 - think outside the box, different tactics to get word out
- Green Decade (Newton, MA)
 - see hand out with committee information to get more people signed up and list of possible volunteer opportunities

7. Look for Collaborations

- share and exchange ideas/current projects with other groups, network, make connections, let others know what your org is doing, find out about theirs
- ask to present at other organization’s meeting

- c. invite people from other organizations to your events
- d. Example: Bicycle Boston, Walk Boston and health groups
- e. Example: New England Grassroots Environment Fund organizes a retreat for its grantees
 - Woodbury College will do mediation training at next retreat

IV. Maintaining Your Group

A. Meetings

1. Start and end on time
2. Introductions: get to know each other better
3. Agenda: not anything fancy, just a basic guideline
4. Encourage participation from all, draw out quiet and shy
5. Food and drink
6. Positive responses and feedback
7. Change the facilitator
8. Thank people
9. Delegate/ask – best way to engage people, develop leadership

B. Meeting Site

1. Familiar
2. Accessible and comfortable
3. Date/time work for many
4. Reminders prior to meeting
5. Set next date
6. Discussion items for next mtg

C. Leadership Development

1. Delegation – recognizing people’s talents, personality types
2. Titles – team captain, committee chair – make people proud
3. Recognition
4. Volunteer sheet – list of activities – try to get to everyone on town’s activities list; town newsletter or email list

V. Presentation by Debby Hinman

Getting Cold River designated under the NH Rivers Management & Protection program required support from 5 towns on the river, and included 3 more in watershed

- Getting to know how each town is run important
- Made sure Committee included diverse membership
- Did outreach to all landowners on river and all landowners in towns with 50+ acres
- Held meetings in all towns
- Winter workshops in town libraries. Importance of how talks are titled – for example “Estate Planning” vs “Keeping Land in the Family.” Donated speakers’ books to library w/plate acknowledging CRLAC gift (eg Steven Small book in every library in watershed)
- Emphasis on outreach via kids in schools – gets kids excited, link to parents (photo displays, calendar...)
- Co-sponsored talks and events w/businesses to get more diverse audience
- Use big email list to get the word out about events. Need to get word out beyond your group. “Email from someone I know” was biggest draw to events. Media announcements not a big draw.

- Dump is a great place to meet people
- Have projects people can plug into, get engaged in
- Outreach is a continual, ongoing effort!

VI. Brainstorm: What Outreach Have You Done in Your Community?

Cornish: -conservation award at town meeting for an individual
-partner with local high school on hydrology studies

Lyme: snowshoe, hiking, birding events on town properties

Bradford: tear-out page in town report where people can list conservation concerns and can sign up to volunteer

UVTA: Trails Day 1st Sat of June, every town can participate, June 5th
-email: trails@valley.net

Hartford: educational newsletter on riparian buffers mailed to all

Acworth: town report page of water related rules – what you need to know about permits

Lebanon: partnership with Recreation Dept, map of trails on conserved town lands, needing to raise \$ for this, series of seasonal outings, collect names, contacts, follow-up

Concord: town/city webpage – use it to let people know about conservation lands/trails

Lebanon/Plainfield: “Poster Ballot Project” by H.S. students, have people “vote” at town meetings which open spaces are important to them, 900 responses

Langdon: bike and road race fundraiser, ask townspeople to put up racers, and lodging fees are donated “Bed and Bike”

Cornish: Green-up Day

Sharon: Green-up Day – people sign-up for certain roads, adopt-a-road

Strafford: publish who is cleaning up road

Bradford: contest among H.S. students – wash and sort recyclables on Green-up Day

Cold River Local Advisory Committee: host meeting for town officials of several towns w/ educational topic

VII. Any New Ideas From the Meeting?

Strafford: talk to road agent re bridge assessment; safety cones/vests to create visibility as well as safety

Cornish: workshop on permitting processes, etc.

Orford: Posterboard displays – available @ Staples, discount stores

Concord: hinge corkboards for displays

Grafton: hike/bike to help people understand what natural resources they have (ponds endangered)

East Montpelier: use local “inputs” as resource to lead events

Bradford: town email to share info

UVLSRPC: awards/ recognition (to “the choir” as well)