

Asking Stage

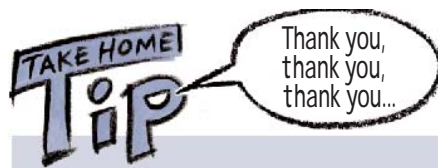
Define your needs and ask for them. A campaign may need volunteers to staff a phone-bank, maintain a database, or present petitions at community events. See what your volunteers want to get out of their involvement, aside from the main campaign goal. Students may desire a specific type of experience to round out their resumes: some may wish to learn a particular skill, and some may wish to make new friends while working for a good cause. Try to find various activities that have a range of time commitments so people can be involved at whatever level is comfortable for them, whether that is one hour per week or three hours per day.

When asking for funds, do some research to establish the potential giving capacity of the donor beforehand. People who might willingly contribute \$50 are likely to give nothing at all if you ask them for \$1000. On the other hand, if a donor is willing and able to contribute \$10,000 you don't want to ask only for \$50.

Always keep the final goal in mind. Be generous about sharing the glory and celebrating victories large and small: let everybody feel that they contributed to the success. Encourage future leaders in every way. Some campaigns will last for years; it is important to keep as many people motivated as possible and ensure that there are successors to carry on.

Thanking Stage

People who feel unappreciated are unlikely to help out the next time. Even though everybody is working for the same cause which will benefit all, and – in theory – they should gain satisfaction from their accomplishments, people need to be continually thanked for the time and effort they are donating. Thank people when they agree to help, and thank them again every time they give time or money. For major donors, the rule of thumb is to thank them seven times for their donation. You can't thank people too often.



For major donors, the rule of thumb is to thank them *seven* times for their donation.

TIMING - The Importance of “Backwards Planning”

Time is the principal constraint faced by an organization. Funds can be raised for most causes, but in campaigns, many deadlines are set by external entities and events over which you have no control, such as the scheduling of a public hearing; and most such deadlines are inflexible. In such cases, it is essential to plan backwards: you will need to assess what steps are needed to accomplish your goal by the date given, and plot tasks backwards from the deadline at realistic intervals in order to determine at what point you will need to begin. In many cases, you will be seeking information (about procedures or a legal process, or making Open Records requests) and may need to wait for replies from agencies or officials, and such delays must be accounted for in your timeline.

If you are working to organize citizen turnout for a public hearing, you need to consider what your strategy is (e.g., e-mail, phone-banking, direct mail) and how much time is required to implement it. When organizing a phone-bank, you need to recruit volunteers, obtain lists of telephone numbers of people to contact, and find a place from which to make the calls. If you've worked on similar campaigns before, you might already know exactly how to accomplish each of these things; but especially if this is the first time, you may need a couple of weeks to get everything in place, so it is important to be well aware of how much time is required for each.

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, a deadline will loom suddenly before you, giving you very little time to organize the troops. This is why having a well-organized group is critical.



Section Four:

Building Leaders

The following section briefly describes some of the qualities of value in a leader. Here again, for more in-depth discussion of the topic, refer to the Sierra Club grassroots training manual, Chapter 2. Few people will have all of the skills on this list, but most are good at some of these things. People often do not see themselves as leaders and are hesitant to step forward as such. But, for example, good listening skills and attention to detail may be exactly what is called for. Do not let this list discourage you; use it simply as a framework for what to look for in yourself and those with whom you work. Sometimes it only takes a little encouragement, and during the course of the campaign, leaders will emerge.

Checking for Leadership Skills

- ◆ **Self-knowledge** – Know yourself well enough to know when and how to delegate tasks, assume authority only when appropriate, and instill confidence in others.
- ◆ **Good listening skills** – Understand what makes people tick and what will be persuasive to different individuals. This requires patience, sensitivity, and empathy, along with dedication, time, and practice.
- ◆ **Understanding of group dynamics** – People from varied backgrounds working together toward a common goal will inevitably develop some tensions within the group, and a good leader will help the group navigate through such difficulties.
- ◆ **Effective communication** – You must possess the ability to make an effective argument orally and in writing. You must also be able to clearly articulate what you expect from people, efficiently solicit information from others, and mediate resolutions when conflicts arise.
- ◆ **Critical thinking** – You need the ability to assess and analyze information, to quickly decide what data

is relevant, weigh the credibility of various sources, and determine how to use the information obtained. You will need efficient information management, analytical thinking, and sound judgment to maintain the required focus.

- ◆ **Organization skills** – Mundane details like establishing goals and deadlines, tracking progress and maintaining records are essential for success. The leader needs to keep himself organized and others on track. Time invested at the beginning in setting up organized systems will save much time later on.
- ◆ **Ability to make a decision** – Although it is important to have the group buy into major aspects of the campaign, there will be times when the leader needs to make a decision quickly. Constant decision-by-committee leads to frustration for all. A good campaign manager can determine when other opinions need to be solicited and when to be autocratic and keep things moving.
- ◆ **Giving and receiving constructive feedback** – Criticism can make people uncomfortable, but sometimes it is necessary to air grievances in order to allow the team to work together better. As the leader, you should create a comfortable environment in which people can communicate feelings openly and honestly; you must also establish ground rules to ensure that feedback is given in a constructive and sensitive manner.
- ◆ **Having faith in people and the democratic process** – Remember that it is the group effort that will win a campaign; all your strength and power will come from the people involved.
- ◆ **Encouraging others** – Learn how to give credit where credit is due – and sometimes give more than others have actually earned. Reflected glory still puts the leader in a good light, and volunteers who feel they have accomplished something will work that much harder in the future.



Section Five: Planning Campaigns, The Matrix

Successful campaigns are well thought out and organized with a clear message and goal. Change happens when individuals come together as a group, create a strategic plan and stick to that plan. A Campaign Planning Matrix has been developed by the Sierra Club over years of campaigning, issue advocacy and organization building for environmental battles. This booklet describes the Matrix and how several organizations in Texas have applied aspects of it in their local environmental battles.

Grassroots organizing comes from the bottom up. If you've ever gardened, you may be familiar with the battle to keep the grass out of the flowerbeds. You pull up one tuft, but it has a long root that stretches three feet more around the flowers. If you aren't out there every week removing those roots, the grass takes over. That's how you want your campaign to be. Wherever public officials go, and whichever direction they look, there will be another citizen urging them to do the right thing on your issue. Obviously this requires a lot of people; otherwise your few volunteers get burned out fast. The Sierra Club manual says, "Grassroots organizing is nothing more than building political strength by empowering large numbers of people to affect public policy through their involvement in the political process."

From the very beginning of the campaign, when getting together in the very first small group to determine if there is an interest in organizing to solve a problem, it is important to define the following in that initial meeting:

- ◆ **Issue Focus**
- ◆ **Goals**
- ◆ **Strategic Targets**
- ◆ **Message**

Start with the bare bones and delegate and make arrangements to flesh out the details. For maximum

The Campaign Planning Matrix

Think of this matrix as a recipe that will produce a fantastic meal for all if you follow the directions step-by-step.

1. Issue Focus

- 2. **Campaign Goals**
 - Conservation goals
 - Organization goals



3. The Lay of the Land

- Organizational strengths and weaknesses
- Allies and opponents

4. Strategy

- Strategic vehicle
- Targets
- Decision-makers (primary targets)
- Secondary targets
- Public audiences

5. Campaign Communication

- Messages/slogan
- Story
- Media outlets

6. Tactics and Timeline

7. Resource Management

- Campaign budget
- Donor management/fundraising
- Volunteer recruitment and stewardship

success, it is critical that you start at the beginning of the matrix and work through it in order.

That said, remember that everything in this book applies to an "ideal" campaign. Many campaigns have achieved success utilizing the resources at hand and implementing only some of the suggestions here; but

your chances of success increase if you go about organizing your campaign in a methodical fashion and incorporate as much of this matrix as is feasible.

If you have ever worked on a campaign before, the following cartoon may look familiar to you. A group of people is gathered around a kitchen table. Everyone is busily discussing what needs to be done...



The first frame of this cartoon is not a planning meeting! This is a bunch of people working together on a "to do" list. There is no discussion of goals, research, targeting, strategy, or message. This is just a brainstorming session on tactics with no productive focus. Do not allow yourselves to get sidetracked with such trivia. These questions can be delegated to specific committees or individuals after the significant decisions have been made. The Matrix ("Meeting to Create Matrix" in the cartoon) can help your group remain focused on the significant questions if you start at the beginning and follow it in order.

There is an old organizing adage: "If it ain't written down, it ain't a plan." It is not enough to discuss what you are going to do; it must be written, copied, and shared with campaign coordinators. The written plan is the team's shared understanding of the campaign's goals, message, and strategy. The point of a written plan is to provide direction and focus for the entire team throughout the duration of the campaign.

Getting Started with the Campaign Planning Matrix

You should launch your campaign effort with a planning meeting to create your Matrix. It will need

to be a much more structured and productive discussion than the "bogus" one illustrated in the cartoon! Below is a list of what you will need:

THE SETTING - A quiet, comfortable environment with no distractions - no phones to answer, no small children, no people walking in and out.

THE SUPPLIES - Easel, lots of large sheets of paper, masking tape to display recorded thoughts around the room, and thick colored markers.

THE ROLES - A designated facilitator, who encourages full participation from all planning participants and ensures that the conversation flows and progress is being made. A recorder, who takes thorough notes. You may also want to consider having a designated timekeeper to monitor the flow of the agenda and keep things moving.

The role of the facilitator is an important one and this person should be chosen carefully. The role of the facilitator at the planning meeting is not to



The role of the facilitator is not to dominate the discussion but to move the agenda along, drawing out reluctant participants.

dominate the discussion, but rather to move the agenda along, drawing out reluctant participants, managing over-talkative ones and self-proclaimed "experts," building a consensus, and keeping the topic on track. Perhaps an experienced person from another organization who has run an environmental campaign can be tapped to facilitate.

THE ATTENDEES - All people who may have a stake in the outcome. These could be veterans of other campaigns, people who know the community well and understand the issues involved or have important political connections, or just people who need to be part of the team to ensure their buy-in later on.

THE TIME FRAME - Usually three to five hours, depending upon the complexity of the situation.

THE PREPARATION - The facilitator and other key organizers need to be familiar with the Matrix and background information regarding the issue, the community, and the context of the proposed campaign. It is helpful to have information surrounding the campaign issues on handouts for attendees to read.

THE RULES - Often meetings begin by the group establishing the ground rules for discussion. These might include: no interrupting each other, no "side-bar" discussions, no repeating or rephrasing things that have already been said, and staying on topic. The facilitator will be responsible for making sure the rules are followed throughout the meeting.

THE NEXT STEPS - After the initial planning meeting, the leaders will need to do some additional work to turn the completed Matrix into a more comprehensive written plan. This will include developing the group's strategy, fine-tuning the message, designing an earned media program, ("earned" meaning your organization does something to make news), finalizing a budget, etc.

Defining Your Campaign Issue

The first step is defining your campaign issue. It must be clear and to-the-point so that it can be easily communicated and understood in a sentence or two.

What water issue will your campaign address? Most of the campaigns for which this book will be used will have that question answered for them. For the citizens involved in the Paluxy River coalition, the Brownsville Dam, and the Marvin Nichols project, the issue was given: in each case, residents sought to preserve the rivers in their current state and prevent the dams and reservoirs from being built. In the Austin example, the issue was to protect water quality in the Edwards Aquifer by preventing excess development over the aquifer, in this case specifically, construction of the Wal-Mart.

The Sierra Club training manual offers an issue criteria checklist to help determine whether your campaign is appropriate to your circumstances. Again, some of these points may not be applicable to your situation, but this list can help you focus more specifically on some aspect of the issue.

Remember...

"Soon" is not a date.
"Some" is not an amount.
"Someone" is not a name.

- ◆ Will your campaign result in a concrete and quantifiable improvement in the environment (or, alternatively, will it prevent significant harm from being done)?
- ◆ Is it an issue that a broad range of people will understand and care deeply about? If not, can you reshape it so that more people will care? Sometimes this requires adjusting your message so that people recognize that it does affect them, even if they did not realize that before.
- ◆ Is the issue widely and deeply felt in your community? In the case histories given here, the answer to this question is a resounding Yes, which is why the campaigns accomplished what they did. The members of the community cared deeply enough to be compelled to action.
- ◆ Does your organization have the resources (money, people and connections) necessary to win the campaign? Sometimes a campaign starts with next to none of these resources, but determination may be

sufficient to prevail anyway. The families of the Paluxy River hired a lawyer to help them through the long legal processes with state agencies; year after year, they held monthly fish fries on their beautiful properties along the river. They became renowned for these events and raised a good portion of their legal fees this way. They started with little, but they never gave up.

◆ Will the issue bring people together and avoid alienating outside individuals and/or organizations that might be needed as allies in the future? Once again, you may have no choice in your selection of an issue, but do bear in mind the importance of maintaining good relationships with other people and organizations.

◆ Is the campaign winnable? Do you have clear targets, a realistic time frame, and achievable goals? In many cases, the opposition will have you believe that your campaign can never be won, as with the Marvin Nichols project. But if you can get enough people involved and draw enough attention to your issue, almost any campaign can be won.

Once you've defined the issue, do some homework. Contact environmental organizations, scientific experts, university professors, relevant Web sites, etc. to locate reliable and comprehensive data regarding the potential environmental, economic, and social impacts of the proposed project or policy changes.

The importance of knowing your facts cannot be overemphasized. Both the Brownsville Dam and Marvin Nichols coalitions produced informational booklets about the issues. In both cases, activists documented the significant negative environmental, social, and economic effects that these projects would have and demonstrated that solutions other than dams and reservoirs were superior and less expensive methods of assuring water supply. This information helped to persuade other citizens to join their coalitions, and it helped to convince some decision-makers not to support the projects in question. See Appendix 3 for information on Threatened and Endangered Species in Texas.

The presence of threatened or endangered species is sometimes sufficient to slow down or even prevent

certain projects, so research whether any of these species exists in your area and would be affected by proposed projects there.



Defining Your Campaign Goals

A formal plan with stated goals, strategies, and tactics is key to a successful campaign. None of these can be accomplished without a successful organization. As you grow your campaign, you should make sure that your organization grows in size and resources so that it can achieve the conservation goals.

In the Paluxy River case, at the start of their struggle, only a small number of people felt strongly about the issue, and they certainly did not have the resources necessary to win; nor was the campaign necessarily winnable. Nonetheless they refused to give up. Don't get discouraged just because your campaign starts out small.

Once you've developed your issue focus, your group will determine the campaign's goals, both conservation and organizational, and your focus will become much more specific. Goals must be expressed clearly, aiming toward a tangible result. You need to define what is a victory and what will be the end of your campaign. Something like "improving the water quality" of the local river is too vague and specifies no end point. Your goal should be quantified and expressed as "adopting an agency rule that requires a reduction in the level of Pollutant X to N parts per billion." Defeating a potentially destructive initiative, like one of these dam projects, is also a clearly

defined goal for a campaign. In our examples, the goals became further defined and specified as the people acquired more information about the process involved.

Sometimes, as you evaluate your campaign focus and available resources, you may rethink your original concept entirely. Sometimes there isn't a choice. If, as in the case of the Paluxy River families, your livelihood and happiness depend on the outcome of the campaign, your only choices are to give up or to fight under the given constraints. They chose to fight.

Conservation Goals

Some campaigns may last for a very long time. The Paluxy River families fought their local project for 16 years. The Brownsville Dam project has been ongoing for 20 years, and as the issue has evolved, so have the goals of the coalition fighting the project. Sometimes, especially when a campaign lasts for years, the conservation goal can be described in three stages: immediate, interim, and long-term. For example:

Immediate goal: "Stop the local authorities from approving this (specific) construction project."

Interim goal: "Inform targeted public audiences that such projects impair wildlife habitats and are not necessary for providing water to the region."

Long-term goal: "Keep the river flowing continuously."

Sometimes the goal has only one stage, and sometimes the goal changes and expands in scope as organization members get more involved in fighting the problem. As your campaign and its goals evolve, the campaign may gain and lose people over time. Do not become discouraged over this fact. Instead, help to motivate and recruit people by remembering always to thank them for their involvement and efforts and celebrating all victories, even small ones.

The Marvin Nichols coalition's overall goal was to prevent the dam and reservoir project from being built. The first step was to remove it from the Region D water plan, then from the Region C plan as well. Each of these steps required numerous different

campaign activities and was a goal in itself. The No Aquifer Big Box coalition started out trying to prevent Wal-Mart from building a Supercenter on the aquifer; at this point in time, they are working for comprehensive regulations to prevent all such "big box" projects from being built in the aquifer's recharge zone.

It may take several years to secure some victories; therefore, your immediate and interim goals would be incremental but important steps toward your ultimate destination. For instance, let's say it takes five votes on the city council to pass a new law preventing big boxes over the aquifer, but you know you can only secure four votes. However, it only takes four votes to place a moratorium on big box construction in that area. It is a temporary solution, and it's a smaller win, but it may be the right choice for now.

Organizational Goals

Your organizational goals will strengthen the organization so that it is able to support the conservation goal(s). As the campaign grows in scope, so will the needs of the organization in order to support the goals. Organizational goals could look something like this:

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

- Develop two new leaders willing to take on a specific responsibility
- Establish good working relationships with two new coalition partners
- Create a comprehensive list or database that includes lists or contacts at three TV stations, three newspapers, five radio stations, and two magazines
- Raise \$1,000

As you know by now, both the conservation and organization goals should be written down and monitored throughout the campaign. Monitoring and adjusting as situations change will allow you to be aware of how these changes will affect your organization.

Assessing the Lay of the Land

At the initial planning meeting, the group needs to assess the lay of the land, which consists of a) organizational strengths and weaknesses, and b) allies and opponents. These will help you determine what are realistic goals for both your campaign and your organization. Note that assessing your opponents also includes evaluating their strengths and weaknesses to know what you will need on your side. See Appendix 2 for a list of environmental organizations that may be able to offer you some assistance.

Defining your group's strengths and weaknesses is a critical part of the process. What resources do you have? Think in terms of people, money, time, and connections. Find out who in your group has what skills. Who is good at data entry – or at least willing to do it? This will be crucial for keeping track of your volunteers and their contact information, primary and secondary targets (decision-makers), the public you contact, and so on. Is somebody in your group a talented public speaker who can help to inform other groups about this issue? Do you have people with legal knowledge or good research skills? Does someone personally know one of the local elected officials? Do you have any attorneys or wealthy landowners in your group, or could you recruit some to your cause?

What resources do you lack? Is this a campaign that will require a lot of money? Do you have the information you need to fight your opponent? Being properly informed about the issue, the decision-making timeline, and the legal rules is critical. If your group has funds available, hire someone who already knows the rules and has experience in this area, such as a consultant or an attorney. The choice of issue may be a weakness in itself (if, for example, only very few people care about it in the beginning), but this may be unavoidable. The point is to be aware of that fact and determine a way to deal with it.

After having assessed strengths and weaknesses, you will know better what allies to seek. Ideally, your allies will help to compensate for some of your weaknesses. However, some individuals and groups

will be your natural allies anyway, whose strengths may overlap your own, but do not discount these people. It's important to have as many allies as possible, because it is likely that your opponents will be well-funded and more powerful than you are. The biggest key to success will be a broad-based coalition, but sheer numbers do help.

Which special-interest groups or community organizations are likely allies – who shares your campaign goals? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what resources can they contribute? Think outside the box.



The biggest key to success is a broad-based coalition.

Knowing your enemies and their strengths and weaknesses is essential. Evaluate your opponents in the same way you have evaluated your own and your allies' resources and lack thereof. This might entail using the Web, calling their public relations departments, reading their annual reports, soliciting information from other groups who have already done battle with them, as well as simply paying attention to the daily news, especially as your campaign heats up. The objective is to get to know your opponents as well as you know yourself.

The No Aquifer Big Box coalition had the great strength of being broad-based, unifying unlikely allies. Neighborhood residents who had never been active on aquifer protection issues started working in close coordination with environmentalists who were passionate about such issues. In addition, the coalition discovered through research and communication with other groups that Wal-Mart had a poor environmental record, with numerous fines from the EPA for violation of the Clean Water Act on its construction sites. They also found out that there was already an array of organizations battling the company on several fronts, from employment

conditions to discrimination in hiring and promotional practices. This was ammunition in the public relations battle to demonstrate that Wal-Mart was not a good neighbor and was not likely to abide by water quality regulations.

The Marvin Nichols coalition recognized early that their weakness was lack of knowledge and experience with the type of situation they found themselves in. They called Janice Bezanson and TCONR to help them organize and provide more information about the process. They became a cohesive group, no mean feat in such a rural area. Bezanson was an ally who helped offset their weakness by providing expertise on the topic, along with organizing experience.

Eventually this coalition also grew into a very broad-based one, which became a terrific strength. The owner and upper management of Ward Timber Company, a company active in the area, became involved in opposing the project because the proposed inundation area of the reservoir included thousands of acres of rare hardwood forest. Environmentalists allied with loggers – "tree-huggers" united with "tree-choppers" – made a rare, impressive, and newsworthy combination.

The key weakness of the Brownsville Dam coalition was the failure to recognize the importance of agreeing upon a single, firm goal for the entire group at the beginning. Each organization involved opposed the project for different reasons: USFWS had concerns about their refuge; Audubon had concerns about their wildlife sanctuary; Sierra Club had general concerns about the environment and wildlife habitat along the entire affected segment of the river; and a few citizens had concerns about potentially poor engineering and possible flooding in Matamoros, Mexico.

Because of the wildlife refuge in the area, USFWS first declared the project "incompatible" with the refuge, and had that ruling stood, it would have stopped the project completely. However, at that point, the Public Utilities Board (who were proponents of project) negotiated with USFWS and offered them as mitigation some land the Service had long wanted to acquire. USFWS agreed, dropping their opposition to the overall project. The PUB effectively employed the "divide and conquer"



“Tree-huggers” united with “tree-choppers” made a rare, impressive, and newsworthy combination.

strategy, which demonstrates a weakness that coalitions must guard against. In this case no one recognized the fact that they did not really all share the same goal: they failed to articulate their goals clearly. It is easy to assume that environmental groups share a common vision, but every organization, even when working steadily toward the broader goal of environmental protection, has somewhat different long-term goals and hence its own specific agenda on any given issue. It may be natural to assume that Sierra Club, as an environmental organization, will be your ally in preserving wilderness. This is probably the case, but you must find out whether your issue aligns with the current goals they have defined for their organization, and whether they have the staff or volunteers available to work on it or go the distance with you. Involved citizens need to be aware of such complications and address such points early on when forming coalitions.

One member of the Brownsville Dam coalition said that in retrospect they might have done better had they also made more efforts to inform and involve groups in the urban area, as opposed to only the environmental groups. Coalition members could have spoken at the Lion’s Club or Rotary Club, for example, to let them know why some people were opposing the project and why, contrary to popular

belief, the project was not actually necessary for the region's water supply. In addition, they could have targeted decision-makers at the USFWS to align the agency's goal with their own.

On the other hand, the Brownsville Dam coalition had the great advantage of counting among its members several activists with campaign organizing experience. Having a federal agency on their side was also a boon.

The Paluxy River families recognized their weakness early on in that there were few of them, while their opponents had great financial resources and political clout. They realized they would need an attorney and hired Stuart Henry, a lawyer with decades of experience in environmental issues. Their strength was their unflagging determination. They worked incessantly to raise the money to pay their legal fees, and they also continued for years to travel to Austin and other places to attend public hearings whenever necessary.

Strategizing

Now that your organization has developed its goals in Section Two, the strategy is where you figure out how to achieve those goals, who will support the effort, and who will meet your demands. This is your blueprint for victory!

Strategic Vehicle

The strategic vehicle is the means to the end, how you will carry out your strategy. There are many different ways that you can effect change. Once you have defined your goals you will need to decide on a method of achieving them. This may mean stopping specific actions by a company or developer, pressuring a regulatory agency or persuading a city council to support your campaign goals, or getting a planning group to drop a reservoir project. The important thing is to select a strategic vehicle that is appropriate, given your group's particular situation when considering the current political climate, your relationships with various government officials, and your group's resources. In short, you have assessed your strengths and weaknesses and your allies and opponents; now you are deciding how you can best

achieve the campaign goals you identified earlier, given your assets and limitations.

In the Wal-Mart fight, the No Aquifer Big Box coalition originally thought their strategic vehicle would be to influence the Austin City Council to prevent construction of the Supercenter over the Edwards Aquifer. In the end, the issue was resolved in a different way, but their chosen methods were still successful.

Choosing your strategic vehicle is again a point at which information becomes essential, as the more information you have, the better able you are to determine what strategies will be effective in achieving your campaign goals. The No Aquifer Big Box group used the negative information they gathered about the corporation to influence public opinion and generate more comments.

Once you have selected a strategic vehicle you will need to figure out what individual(s) you need to target in order to deliver your conservation goal. This is where you involve the public in holding the targeted decision-makers accountable for meeting your demands. First, the appropriate decision-makers must be identified. Who is it that can make the decision (or influence the decision-makers) and will support your conservation goal?



There's more than one way to achieve our goal!

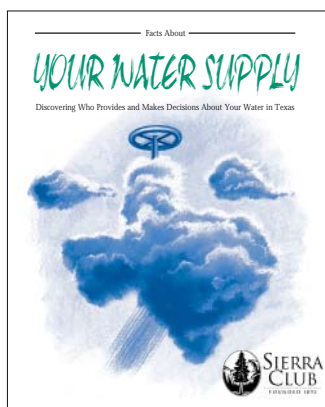
Various Methods to Achieve Goals:

1. stopping specific actions
2. pressuring an agency
3. persuading public officials
4. getting a water planning group to drop a proposed reservoir project

Decision-makers, whether elected officials such as City Council members, or political appointees such as the commissioners for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), need to know that the public is interested in a particular issue. Holding them accountable involves criticizing decision-makers who do the wrong thing and thanking those who do the right thing.

A strategic campaign is one that focuses all of its time, money, people, and effort solely on those primary targets that are worthy of the investment. Therefore, strategy is as much about what you will not be doing as it is about what you will be doing. There are several key things to remember. Don't get sidetracked! Do not spend resources on an activity that won't influence your primary target. Some of your resources will be used to influence secondary targets or public audiences that can influence your primary target. Developing a solid Matrix will help you evaluate where to effectively allocate resources. It is easy to think that you need to participate in every fair or event that your group hears about, but not all of these opportunities will have the same ability to reach your targets. Pre-planning and evaluation is critical!

The Sierra Club publication, *Your Water Supply*, can help you greatly in determining who is responsible for making the decisions that will affect you. In Texas there are hundreds of entities with influence over water supplies. These include state entities like the Texas Legislature and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, regional entities such as river authorities and groundwater conservation districts, and local entities such as municipal water suppliers, municipal utility districts, private water suppliers, and more. You need to know who controls the water supply in order to know what decision-makers to target.



Here is a brief summary of the major water supply decision-makers in Texas; more information is given in Appendix 1: Water Supply and Regulatory Entities in Texas.

The Texas Legislature, which meets from January through May of each odd-numbered year, is the law-making body for state government and is therefore ultimately responsible for making and revising state water laws, providing financial appropriations to state water agencies, and setting the legal requirements and procedures for creating various local and regional water entities. Most water-related legislation goes through the House and Senate Natural Resources Committees.

www.capitol.state.tx.us

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the state's primary environmental regulatory agency, involved with water quality, quantity, regulations, permits, prices, suppliers, and consumers. It is governed by three Commissioners appointed by the Governor.

www.tceq.state.tx.us

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) regulates recreational fishing in Texas' waters and commercial fishing on the coast, but it has no direct regulatory authority to ensure water quality and quantity for fish, wildlife, and recreational resources. The TPW Commission, which governs TPWD, consists of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

www.tpwd.state.tx.us

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) is the state agency primarily responsible for water planning and for administering water financing for the state; it is governed by a six-member board of directors whose members are appointed by the Governor.

The TWDB mission is to provide leadership, technical services, and financial assistance to support planning, conservation, and development of water for Texas.

www.twdb.state.tx.us

The Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) is the state agency that implements the Texas Soil Conservation Law, enacted to combat soil erosion. In the 1970s the agency was also designated as the lead state agency for addressing nonpoint source pollution of water from agricultural and silvicultural (timbering) operations. Each of the five members of this governing board is elected by soil and water conservation district directors in the state district they represent.

www.tsswcb.state.tx.us

Groundwater conservation districts (GCDs) are regional entities authorized by the Texas Legislature to provide for the conservation, preservation, protection, recharge, and prevention of waste of groundwater and groundwater reservoirs. No state agency has the right to regulate the production or use of groundwater, but GCDs can provide some local controls – indeed, they are the only entities devoted to conserving groundwater supplies. The TWDB website has a map of GCDs in Texas, and the website of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts has more information on GCDs in general.

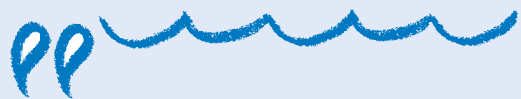
www.texasgroundwater.org

River authorities own rights to more than 70 percent of the state's surface water; their primary function is to distribute and conserve surface water. Some may also monitor and enforce surface water quality, finance and conduct water projects, manage wastewater systems, and oversee permit application processes. The water to which river authorities have rights is either sold directly to consumers or to other suppliers of water. The TCEQ's water supply division can help you find more information about the many river authorities in Texas; call 512-239-4691.

There are other regional entities such as the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) and the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District, which have some authority over groundwater in specific regions.

Local entities include municipal water suppliers, municipal utility districts, water supply corporations, private water suppliers, water control and improvement districts, special utility districts, and freshwater supply districts.

Although the mission statement of a number of these entities includes the concept of conserving water, in reality many have not been especially active in that regard historically, which is part of the reason why citizens in Texas have so often found themselves in the position of fighting the construction of dams and reservoirs when water conservation might be more effective. In Texas, private businesses are generally a high priority, even when profits come at the expense of the public good. This demonstrates again why it is so important to choose your targets wisely and exert significant public pressure on the right people.



...citizens in Texas find themselves fighting dam and reservoir construction when *water conservation* might be more effective.



Decision-makers (primary targets)

Who will make the decisions regarding your issue? Having names of the specific individuals is critical. The "city council" or "the Legislature" isn't going to help your cause, but specific individuals within these organizations might. Which individuals will you target to secure victory? Not sure who to target? Find out everything you can about how the governing body operates: when it meets, its policies and procedures, etc. Then research everything you can about its various members: their past voting records, their individual ideologies, their political connections, their campaign contributors, and so on. If you can identify a likely ally, that person may provide useful information about his peers.

To determine which decision-makers to target within a larger body, start by using the research you have conducted to determine where they stand on your issue. For example, let's say that you are trying to pass a new zoning ordinance at the city council level. There are seven members and you need a simple majority (four votes) to win. You have assessed the current sentiment among the council members regarding your proposal and you have divided them up as follows:

- ◆ Happy and Doc are supportive – they make up your base and need to be solidified and thanked.
- ◆ Grumpy and Dopey are solidly opposed – you would waste your time with them and should therefore write them off.
- ◆ Sleepy, Bashful, and Sneezy are persuadable – you need to work to secure the support of at least two of them to make up your four votes.



Overall, your objective is to hold these targeted decision-makers accountable to public demand and make them deliver on your conservation goals. How will you accomplish this? You will need to look at each target within the decision-making body, and determine exactly what you want from them and what tactics you will employ to accomplish your goal. For example, you might want your base supporters (Happy and Doc) to help you persuade the swing votes (Sleepy, Bashful, Sneezy). Or you might want to have them try to persuade one of the opponents (Grumpy or Dopey) to abstain from voting. You will need to design an individual strategy for reaching each of the key decision-makers, and a set of specific tactics for achieving that strategy (see page 34, Designing Media Tactics.)

The Marvin Nichols coalition contacted each member of the water planning group that represented them in Region D to speak about their opposition to the Marvin Nichols dam and reservoir. They informed the decision-makers about the harm the project would inflict on the area, and the negative economic effects if valuable trees were inundated and lost to harvest, landowners lost their hunting leases, families were forced to sell land for decreased value, and tens of thousands of acres of property were lost from the tax rolls. They also discussed the devastation inflicted by drowning precious wetland habitats.

Secondary targets

Once you have determined which particular decision-makers are key to this campaign, consider who can influence them and whether you can enlist those people to your cause. These will be your secondary targets. They may be other elected officials or community leaders. They must be people who share your goals, or whom you can persuade to share your goals. For example, the Marvin Nichols coalition enlisted Congressman Max Sandlin, who represented much of the Sulphur River basin at the time, to speak for them at a public hearing. As he "outranked" all other elected officials in the room, his presence had a strong influence. Prior to the coalition contacting him, this was not a high priority

for him; but his constituents educated him regarding the significant negative impacts the project would have on their lives and in the region.

Before approaching your potential secondary targets, consider whether they would be willing to use their connections to your primary targets to advance your goal. Think about who has a relationship or connection with the decision-makers that could prove useful to you. This could be anyone from the governor to a county commissioner to the president of the local PTA. Think about what you can ask these various individuals to contribute to your campaign (an endorsement, a meeting with or letter to your targeted decision-maker(s), a speech at a public hearing, etc.).

Public Audiences

Finally, in developing your strategy, take a look at the community in which you are waging this campaign and determine which specific groups of people you will enlist to create demand and hold the decision-makers accountable for meeting that demand. What types of people live here? Who are the major employers? Use census information, city or county data, information from other organizations that have run campaigns in the past, and just general knowledge gathered from various people at your planning meeting. This information will help your organization to identify specific constituency groups and develop strategies and media messages specifically for these groups. Think in terms of:

- ◆ geography: counties, towns, neighborhoods, etc.
- ◆ demography: women 25-40, men over 60, African-Americans, etc.
- ◆ constituencies: hunters and anglers, soccer moms, etc.

It is important to select no more than two or three public audiences. Once you have identified your audiences, you will need to focus the campaign exclusively on persuading these people to join your effort (using the inform-involve-ask-thank cycle), and not waste any resources (money, time, or effort) on individuals who are not in the targeted group. Enforcing strategic discipline is critical! As the momentum builds over the course of the campaign, it may become increasingly difficult to remain focused

on your designated strategy. Some members of the team may start to panic when the opposition launches a bruising attack and may argue strenuously for a whole new approach. Others may feel uncomfortable with limiting the effort to sway only the identified targets among the decision-makers and may argue for "expanding our box."

It is very easy to get sidetracked and spend limited resources to participate in community events because they take little preparation and are fun. Ask yourself whether the event focuses on the right target and if it does so efficiently. Staffing a table to distribute information about a local water issue at a



Target no more than two or three public audiences.

PTA event is likely to be easy, but it only makes sense if you will be reaching significant numbers of your identified target groups, and if you have a specific action that you are asking these targets to take. A table and volunteers with educational literature and a call to action at a local fishing tournament or bait shop may be more effective. Without a comprehensive strategy-identification process using the Matrix in the beginning, it is very easy to dilute your effectiveness. Time invested in the planning phase will pay off in the strategy phase. Stay the course.

When working to influence the Region D water planning group, the Marvin Nichols coalition focused on their public audiences, activating large numbers of citizens to contact the planning group members. Due to ongoing pressure, the Region D water planning committee decided to consider an amendment to remove the project from the plan. Between the time the public hearing was scheduled and the time it was held, the coalition had generated more than 5,000 emails, telephone calls, and general comments. At