

## Chapter 6

Sharing

Interpretation

Communication as an Ecological Restoration Tool

Citizen Science



“If I had influence with the good fairy which is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it should last throughout life.”

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

## Sharing

Sharing our passion can fill us with deep satisfaction

- a. lead people to the edge of experience and then modestly step aside to give them a chance to experience it for themselves
  - gets them hooked for life



- b. ex. Ken Norris, a professor of UC Santa Cruz
  - “the object is the authority”
  - exploration of California with students by bus
  - stopping along rivers, mountains, forests and deserts for first hand learning
  - naturalist journal
  - sitting for hours in one spot just observing
  - picking a plant, any plant, and looking for it during your hikes

## Interpretation

- a. making meaning, and not just dispensing information
  - form connections rather presenting facts
  - ex. Audubon Canyon Range
    - bleachers where people cant sit and watch herons and egrets nesting
    - interpreters stationed at there to answer any questions that might tickle your fancy



- b. the “naturalist walk” as a tool for interpretation



- select and focus your walk around a particular theme
- having a few elevator speeches up your sleeve helps



- 
- let the natural world be your guide

- capitalize on happenstance sightings
  - tie it back to your theme



- keep your constituents comfortable and hydrated



- zero in on what your constituents find interesting
  - tie it back to your theme



- safety first
  - don't assume they know what poison oak is, even if they say they do- show them anyways (not an exhaustive list)



c. how to respond to “What is the name of that thing?”

- respond with a question that requires observation
  - what color is it?
  - how many petals?
  - draw them in deeply with as many questions as you can



d. learn to say “I don’t know”

- does not mean the end of the story
- take questioner’s name and email and get back to him or her once you’ve found the answer
- make a point of never having to say “I don’t know” to the same question twice
- treat questions as indicators of your constituents’ interests
- certain questions tend to be asked again and again so take the time to learn those answers

e. “The Ranger Talk”

- prepared lecture about 10-20 minutes
- think it through thoroughly before going at it
- practice first
- basic formula
  - tell people what you’re going to say
  - say it
  - tell them what you just said

an informal and comfortable environment is often best



- remember that people are here on their free time- keep it fun!
- repeat your main points
- be passionate about what you’re saying!

- f. reading and listening
- learning from those who came before us
  - one thing at a time
  - all knowledge is socially constructed
  - everything is learned by connecting it to something else already lodged in our mind





## Communication as an Ecological Restoration Tool

- a. often the most important first step to any environmental initiative
  - leads to collaborative conservation
  - particularly useful for projects that stir up strong emotions

- b. should address the needs and perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders
  - neighbors
  - land management agencies
  - commercial users
  - recreational users
  - local and state conservation groups
  - state and federal agencies



c. place/community based initiatives

- involves groups of people who are all interested in the same place (though they may not necessarily be from that place)
  - ex. local watershed group that includes people who recreate in an area but do not live there.

- best when
  - objectives are clearly articulated from the onset
  - led by local participants
  - developed openly and transparently, taking into account the full range of perspectives
  - focused on a particular interest group rather than a larger and broader one
  - focus on smaller areas rather than large one
  - regular dialogue and feedback between opposing interests to avoid deadlock

d. communication in the community

- communication on a daily basis can be powerful tool for ecological change
- speaking at public forums
- arrive before the meeting starts to get your name on the list of speakers
- be specific with your arguments and passionate
- dress for the occasion

- stay positive and talk about solutions, not just blaming others
- be willing to listen to other points of view
- find common interests with an oppositional or unenthusiastic audience
- ALWAYS make yourself available to be part of the group working on the problem at hand



e. informing the community about your project

- invite the public to tour your project
- write an article
- give out contact information or brochures for technical assistance

f. meeting and democratic decision-making

- stick to realistic agenda
- determine ahead of time how decisions will be made
- rotate facilitators among regular participants
- assign timekeeper and note-taker
- end meetings on time to ensure ongoing participation
- create a safe and comfortable environment for talking



## Citizen Science

- a. volunteers participate in regional or global scientific studies
- b. people are already observing nature during the course of their recreation hours-why not make good use of those observations?



- f. back from the field, it is to be hoped that volunteers will share their stories with friends, paving the way for more grassroots efforts in future



- c. amateurs are often as good or even better than academics at identifying species
- d. lends science more “eyes and ears” in the field
- e. gives people a chance to genuinely learn how to do science

