COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

BROCHURES, **PAMPHLETS,** FLYERS & **POSTERS**

What We've Found

Whether presenting background information, announcing a meeting, or celebrating a resource, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, and posters are great tools to reach large numbers of people. Production can range from being fairly inexpensive and homemade, especially with today's desktop publishing capabilities, to slick, four-color, special paper and professionally printed. It all depends upon your budget, your community, and your needs. If the message is clear and the images are captivating, we've seen all types work.

Brochures

Flyers

Posters

Printed documents that contain concise text and strong graphic images such as photos, drawings, maps, or charts.

Pamphlets

JUST THE FACTS

Brochures, pamphlets, flyers, and posters are versatile communication tools. Brochures and pamphlets are usually folded and printed double-sided to get multiple text panels. They are used to promote membership to an organization, give highlights of a project, summarize the findings from a report, show a map of trail system, interpret the features of a particular place or resource, and other brief messages. They can be handed out, stuffed in an envelope, sent as a self-mailer, or placed in libraries, community centers, and other gathering places.

Flyers and posters are typically one-sided and meant to be displayed fully open. Whether mailed or hung on community bulletin boards or other vertical surfaces, they can be used to announce meetings, special events, and contests; recruit volunteers; educate about a resource; etc. Posters can also be used as part of a fundraising event or given to special donors as acknowledgements. Some groups have successfully used them as the culmination of a competition such as photography, a river sporting event, or community anniversary.

HOW TO DO IT

1. DEFINE THE OBJECTIVE

What is the purpose of this publication? Who is the audience? How will it be used? Be as specific as possible in order to more narrowly define the message and help keep it concise.

2. CHOOSE A FORMAT

Knowing the purpose of the piece and having an outline of the message will help decide whether to use a brochure, pamphlet, flyer, or poster. Keep in mind that there are many options for folding brochures and pamphlets. It may be helpful to collect several samples to see which ones work most effectively. Be aware that different folding patterns will affect the costs of production.

3. WRITE IT

Know who the target audience is and write for them. Write a message that conveys feelings, that includes a story or something readers can relate to about your organization or a resource. Be concise – especially for posters and flyers. Use active, not passive, voice and avoid jargon and acronyms.

Remember to include a contact name and phone number; a mailing address; and, if applicable, names of project partners and names and logos of sponsors who made possible the production of the piece. This may be the only representation of your organization that a person sees, so they need to know how to get more information.

2. DESIGN IT

Do not assume that using desktop publishing software will solve all the problems. If budget is a constraint, find a professional and offer to give him or her credit and referrals. Here are some elements to keep in mind:

Readability: Since the ultimate purpose of the piece is for people to get information, it needs to be easy to read. Make sure the font is clear and that it is large enough: 11-12 point size for brochures and pamphlets is minimum (make cover text and the adlines 3-times larger as a general rule); posters and flyers, which are read at a glance, should use big, bold fonts not script or italics. Allow for plenty of white space, which refers to blank areas that have neither copy nor images.

Images: Select only quality photographs and artwork. Images should be used both to attract readers to the information and enhance their understanding of the message. Avoid using photographs, maps and drawings that are inserted just for decoration and do not strengthen a story. Do not resort to clip art to just fill in spaces; you'll lose your own personal identity.

Style: Create a style for your organization that reflects your geography, history, and culture. Consider designing a logo and/or always using the same stock of color paper. Every piece that is published should have a similar look and feel so that it is immediately identifiable to your group.

4. PROOF IT

Always, always have at least one person who was not involved in the writing or design of the piece give it a careful read. Look for typos especially in names and numbers, verify dates and contact information are accurate, and be assured the message is clear.

5. PRODUCE IT

Printing can be as easy as making copies or as complex as a four-color production on glossy paper. What method of printing is chosen will depend upon budget. If you haven't already, consider seeking the support of a sponsor or sponsors. Businesses or other organizations may be willing to help pay for production in return for having their names on the final product.

6. DISTRIBUTE IT

Make the piece available to your target audience in whatever way is most applicable: recruit volunteers to help place pieces in public meeting spaces; alert members to the piece's availability via newsletters and on websites; issue

a press release; hold a meeting to review report findings and have the piece available for attendees to take home; host a gala donor party or a reception for contest winners; etc. If the piece will be mailed, and the mailing list is more than 200 addresses, be sure to inquire about bulk mail permits from the post office.

Use It If…

- You want to communicate a consistent image of and message about your group, organization, or project.
- You have the human resources to write and design a piece and the financial resources to print and distribute and/or mail copies. (Don't forget taping volunteers and sponsors.)
- You need a document to leave behind when doing presentations, to include in mailings, or to send to people who call requesting more information.
- You want to generate publicity through a contest, find a special way to acknowledge donors, or create a fund-raising tool.

Forget It If…

- You cannot clearly identify a need and a target audience.
- You lack the resources to write, design, print and distribute it.
- You have too much text and significantly editing it confuses the message. Don't try using a smaller font size or reducing the number of images or white space to squeeze it all in; instead, consider designing and printing a small pamphlet or booklet.

Timing is Everything

Use brochures and flyers throughout the planning stage and during the life of a project.
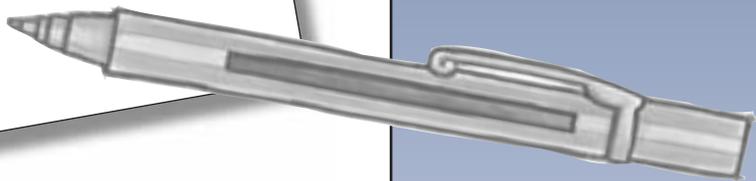
Newsletters

## COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

What We've Found

A well-designed newsletter with stories and information that can make a difference in people's lives will be closely read. Because it is read, it can be an important tool for sharing information. On the other hand, newsletters are the most over-used publication today; they are definitely not for every group or community effort.

Newsletter:
News, feature stories, and graphics that communicate information on a specific topic for distribution to a target audience.
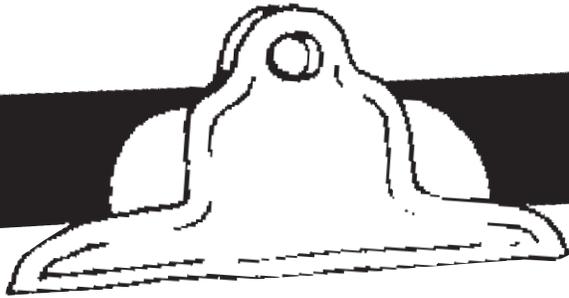
JUST THE FACTS

EVERY NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A BEST SOURCE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION, A TOPIC OR A PROJECT. IF ARTICLES ARE INTERESTING AND EASY TO READ AND THE GRAPHICS OF PROFESSIONAL QUALITY, THE AUDIENCE WILL UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE AND WILL OFTEN ASSIST OR BECOME ADVOCATES FOR THE CAUSE.

WHEN CONSIDERING WHETHER YOUR GROUP SHOULD DO A NEWSLETTER, KEEP IN MIND THERE IS A LOT OF COMPETITION FOR PEOPLE'S ATTENTION. ONE MORE NEWSLETTER MAY NOT GET NOTICED. IT MAY ALSO BE THAT ANOTHER GROUP IS PROVIDING SIMILAR INFORMATION. TO HELP MAKE A DECISION ABOUT WHETHER TO START A NEWSLETTER, ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NEWSLETTER?
- WOULD IT BE MORE EFFECTIVE, AND MORE ECONOMIC, TO PLACE ADVERTISEMENTS IN OTHER GROUPS' NEWSLETTERS AND SUBMIT EDITORIALS TO LOCAL PAPERS?
- IS IT FEASIBLE TO CREATE A WEB SITE AND MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE? DOES THE TARGET AUDIENCE HAVE ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND IS THIS AN ACCEPTABLE METHOD OF COMMUNICATION?
- WHO WILL BE THE EDITOR TO HANDLE DECISIONS REGARDING CONTENT, ASSURE STYLE CONTINUITY AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITING OR GETTING WRITERS FOR EACH ISSUE? WHO WILL OVERSEE THE MAILING?

1. Decide on Content

Most likely your newsletter will be mailed periodically, not daily or even weekly. Thus the stories will not be late breaking news but items of general interest about the project, the area and its people as well as the project schedule or the publication of findings. Make the text interesting, keep it short, and use the active voice ("we are" versus "we have been"). Consider also including:

- A community bulletin board where people can share their project activities and accomplishments.
- Pictures of people in action.
- Quotations and poetry to enhance images or messages.
- A coloring page for children, activity ideas or references or learning more.
- Theme issues that include interviews with experts on that subject.
- Profiles of landowners, volunteers, employees or other stakeholders.
- Descriptions and dates of upcoming events.

2. Design for Readability

Since the ultimate purpose of your newsletter is for people to get information, it needs to be easy to read and not all fonts are easy. Use only two or three different fonts, or typefaces, in the entire newsletter. Make sure the size is also easy to read (11-12 point size). Don't try to squeeze in more copy with a small font (size 8-10); it's better to make the stories shorter or add more pages.

Also use plenty of white space, which refers to blank areas that have neither copy nor images. To immediately create white space, try increasing the margins.

How to Do it

3. Select Images Carefully
Select only quality photographs and artwork. Images should be used both to attract people to the information and to enhance their understanding of the message. To aid in understanding, always include a caption for each image. Avoid using photographs, maps and drawings that are inserted just for decoration and do not strengthen a story.

4. Give it Style
Create an identifiable look that allows immediate recognition when people pick it up from their mailboxes. Be consistent from issue to issue by placing sections like contents, letters from the chairman and community calendars in the same locations. But do take freedom to vary formats of articles like number of columns, use of bullet statements, question-and-answer format, etc.

5. Proof It
Always, always have a person who was not involved in the writing or design of the newsletter give it a careful read before printing. This is not only to look for typos, it is also to make sure paragraphs were not accidentally dropped, captions are included, page numbers are correct, dates and contact information is accurate and that every story and image make sense.

6. Print It
Printing can be as easy as making copies or as complex as a four-color production on glossy paper. What method of printing is chosen will depend upon budget. But whether a newsletter is black-and-white and stapled in the corner or full-color and bound like a magazine is not as important as the content and design.

7. Mail It
Depending upon the size of your mailing list, and if your organization is a government agency or a non-profit, there are several options for reducing mailing costs such as a bulk mail permit for groups mailing to 200 or more. Before starting your first newsletter, determine the best method by visiting your post office to find out what is involved.
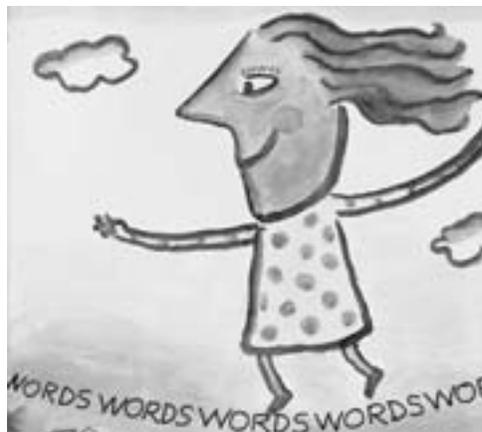
Use It If…

- You have the human resources to write and design newsletters and the financial resources to print and mail copies.

- You have an ongoing need to present detailed information, provide a forum for exchanging ideas, and share updates, announcements and news.

- You want to keep a targeted audience informed on developments over several years.

- You have information to share about a topic that is not covered anywhere else.

Forget It If…

- You do not have the resources to write, design, print and mail more than one issue. Make it a brochure instead.

- You cannot identify a target audience. In other words, you have not been able to identify a group or community that is directly impacted by or supportive of your project.

- Your messages are similar to or would be of interest to other existing groups that already produce newsletters for their members. Editors are always scrambling to find copy and usually welcome submissions from others.
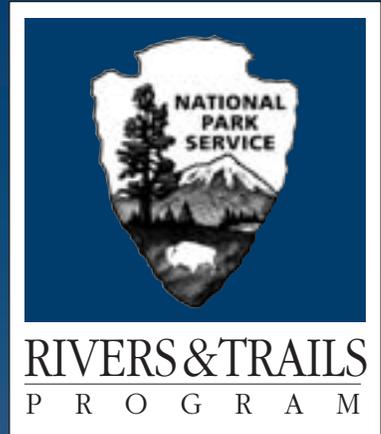
Timing is Everything

Newsletters can be published throughout the life of any project. The key is to determine a schedule and stick with it so people know what to expect. Do not be afraid to adopt an approach of "less is more" and do a bi-monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual publication to save time, energy and dollars.

Newspaper Questionnaires

WHAT WE'VE FOUND

Newspaper questionnaires: An inclusion in a regularly produced publication that both asks for information from readers and gives information to readers.

Newspaper questionnaires can reach a large, broader-based audience, an audience that might not otherwise pay attention to a conservation group, a government program, a histor-

ical society, or other special interest organization. Of the newspaper questionnaires we have seen, the ones that are most effective ask only a few, specific questions and present clear, concise information about a project or resource. Keep in mind the overall objectives: to reach people with information about your project and to let them know you care what they think.
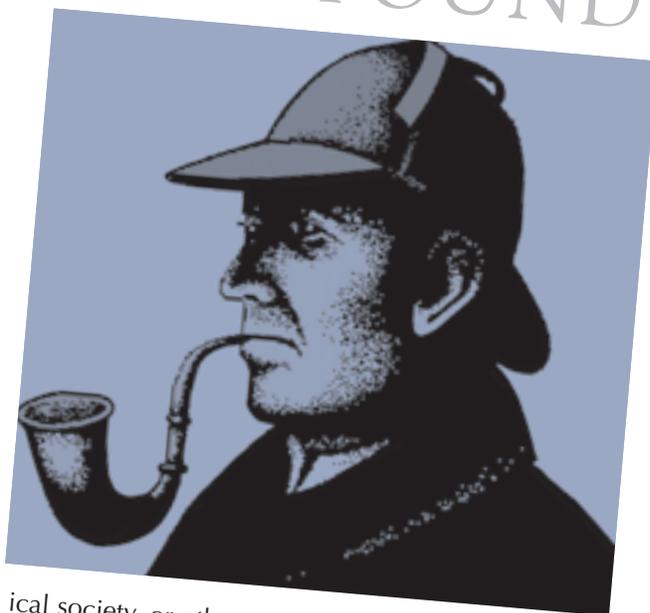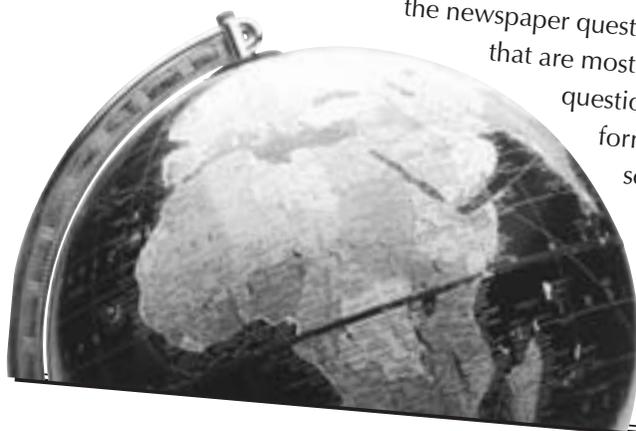
Newspaper Questionnaires

JUST THE FACTS

Newspaper questionnaires are un-scientific opinion polls. Still, they can raise awareness about a project or resource and give people a chance to have input into a process they might not have otherwise.

Newspaper questionnaires are un-scientific opinion polls. Still, they can raise awareness about a project or resource and give people a chance to have input into a process they might not have otherwise.

The questionnaire can be used to gather people's opinions about the most significant cultural, natural, and scenic resources in their community; about community issues; or about the level of interest for resource protection. Responses can help form the basis for designing a more detailed professional survey.

A questionnaire can also have as one of its main purposes to gather names and addresses of people interested in volunteering to help with the effort or to be included on a mailing list. Open-ended questions can be used to get quotes to be used in other publications.

It is important to remember that the questionnaire is reaching only a self-selected audience of sub-scribers, not a random one. Consider publishing the questionnaire in other groups' newsletters or creating a poster that has a pocket for questionnaires to reach more people who may not read the newspaper.

How TO DO IT

1. DETERMINE THE PURPOSE
Why is the questionnaire being done? What information is desired? What message needs to be conveyed? The more specific the purpose, the better structure for writing questions and the text that accompanies them. This is the time to also decide exactly how the information will be used, who will compile it, and to start contacting newspaper publishers or newsletter editors about publishing it.

2. DESIGN IT
Designing good questions is not easy! Keeping in mind the purpose and that there should be only a few questions. Multiple-choice questions are easier to compile and less intimidating for respondents.

Do allow for one open-ended question or a place for people to write their own comments.

Write a paragraph or two that states very clearly who is asking the questions and why, how the information will be used, and how the results will be published or where the results can be obtained. Then show the draft to others who have not worked on it. Ask their opinions about the clarity of both the questions and the background information. Verify that the answers are going to meet the purpose: a question whose answer is of no use is a waste of everybody's time. Revise as necessary.

There should also be clear instructions on how to submit the survey and a deadline. Include a contact name and phone number for people who have questions or want more information. Give return options including the group's address for mailing the completed questionnaire, a fax number, or even an email address.

3. USE THE RESULTS
As the responses come in, start counting. Type answers to open-ended questions and general comments submitted; these comments can become possible testimonials for use in brochures, pamphlets, etc. Enter names and addresses into a mailing list database if that information is included. Write a report, publish a pamphlet, post results on a web site or whatever method was decided upon before the survey began. Be sure to also issue a press release summarizing the results to let people know they were heard.

Use It If…

- You want some quick feedback and want to attract people to your project or your cause.
- You have a good community weekly newspaper with which you want to establish an ongoing relationship.
- You have the financial resources to pay for advertising space. Then design the questionnaire as a full- or half-page advertisement.

Forget It If…

- You want scientific data that statistically reflects the opinions of an entire community. Consider undertaking a formal survey instead.
- There is no local newspaper that targets the area under question. If the distribution is too wide, there may be questionable results because people are not familiar with the area or resource and/or you will have a small return as people do not see how it affects them.
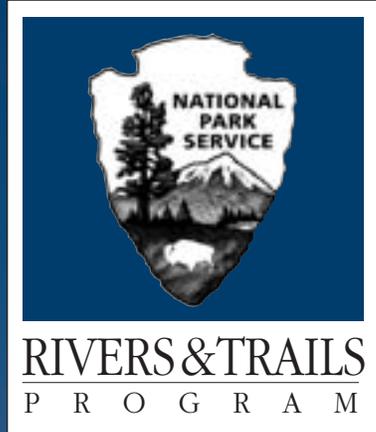
Timing is everything

Publish a newspaper questionnaire in the beginning of a project to get information or in the middle of a project to gauge reactions to proposals.
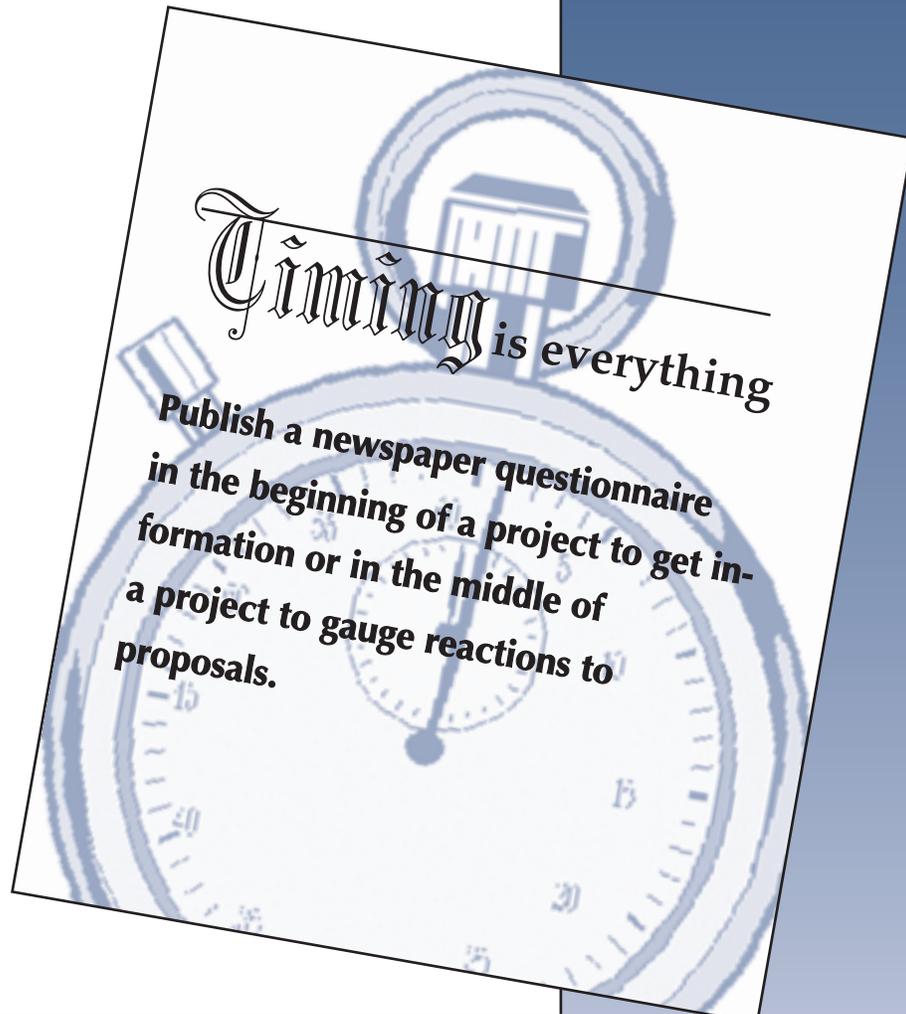
*PRESS***RELEASE**

What We've Found

Press releases can respond to a recent development or announce a position, provide context and background information for breaking news, and announce a newsworthy event that the press can be invited to cover. They give the basic who, what, why, when, how and where and, with relative ease and little expense, they have the potential to reach a wide circulation through print and electronic media.

PRESS RELEASE: A statement or story an organization prepares and distributes to the news media.

Just the Facts:

Press releases provide reporters with information they need so they can decide whether and how to cover a story. The information given to reporters should be legitimately newsworthy and mark important milestones in a group's activities and programs.

To help ensure that news about a project gets noticed and results in media coverage, consider the following:

- Identify the news organizations that are most likely to be interested and write the release so it addresses their interests and audiences.
- Consider the effect the announcement may have on the audiences of the news organizations that receive the release, and place the announcement within the context of trends or developments that affect the target audience.
- Assemble several approved quotes from an organization's leaders or a well-known personality associated with the project to have on hand for writing releases in a hurry.
- Time releases for Monday mornings which are generally best; Fridays are the worst days for most news organizations.
- Don't be discouraged if press releases are not always used. Many reporters save them for a future story or pass them on to other writers that they think might be interested.

HOW
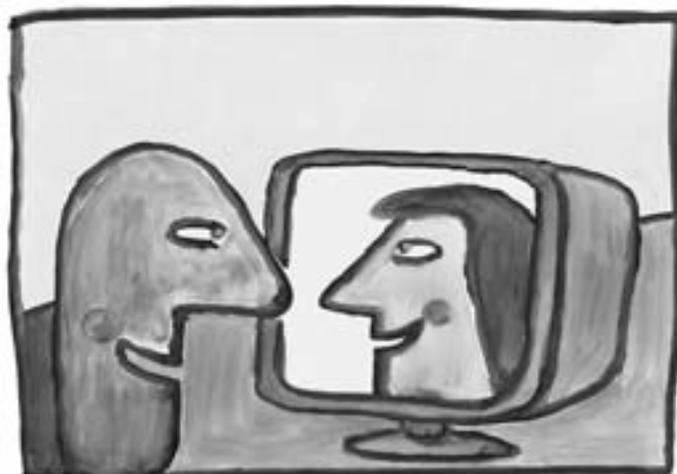
1. CREATE A STRONG MEDIA CONTACT LIST
Long before submitting anything for coverage, establish a strong rapport with news staff. Create a contact list that includes all relevant reporters, columnists, editors, news directors, assignment editors and talk show hosts at all citywide, regional and community newspapers and television and radio stations. To make the list, find a friendly local organization or local government agency for its press list. Other tactics are to scan the local yellow pages and call every media outlet listed or consult a national media directory such as Bacon's directories or News Media Yellow Book.

2. IDENTIFY A NEWSWORTHY EVENT
Such examples include the initial formation of a group or coalition, when an important new organization or public official supports the cause, or when a major public event is being organized such as a rally or town meeting.

IT WORKS

3. DON'T BURY THE LEAD!
Summarize what's most important—called the lead—in the first paragraph. It should capture the most essential information and tempt the reader further. Then answer the basic who, what, why, how and where. Leave the least important information for the end so it can be edited if need be. The story should be one-to two-pages, double-spaced.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   **CONTACT: Name**
                                    Organization
                                    Street Address and email address
                                    Telephone Number

DATE:

HEADLINE:

BODY:

4. FORMAT IT LIKE A PRO
- Put it on letterhead.
- Include date of issue and time of release (usually "immediate").
- Give a contact person and phone number in the top right hand corner so a reporter can follow up for questions or to conduct an interview.
- Put a brief heading on the top of the page; repeat the heading in shortened form on top of succeeding pages.
- Briefly and clearly state the organization's name and purpose at the end of the release.

5. A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS
Include a photo that illustrates the project or activity that you are announcing, accompanied by a descriptive caption.

6. SEND THE RELEASE
Three to five days before a story should be published in a daily newspaper and up to two weeks before a weekly paper, send the release—either by mail, fax, or email. Send it to one contact, preferably someone who has covered the organization or project before. Never send the same release to two different people at the same television or radio station or newspaper.

7. FOLLOW UP
Don't sit back and wait to see if the story appears. Follow up with a telephone call whether the release was mailed, e-mailed or faxed.

Use It If...

• You need free publicity for your organization.

• You need to let the public know about an event.

• You need to reach a wide audience to increase awareness about your project.

Forget It If...

• You are expecting press releases to cover all public communication. Press releases should not be used indiscriminately and routinely. If they are sent too often, the media will start to ignore them and your group.

• You want to reach a small or targeted audience.

• You are looking for a way express your own opinion. Emphasize facts, not opinions unless as quotes from someone else's mouth. Consider writing an Op-Ed piece if you want to argue a specific viewpoint.

• You are expecting a windfall of publicity. Time of day (if a news cast), the page the article appears on (if a newspaper), and length of story all affect whether or not the audience sees the article or hears the story, and how effective it is.

RIVERS & TRAILS
P R O G R A M

National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 1010
Washington, DC 20240
www.nps.gov/rtca

Timing is Everything

Press releases should be used throughout the project—as long as there is substantial new news to report. But remember thecaution to use press releases judiciously.