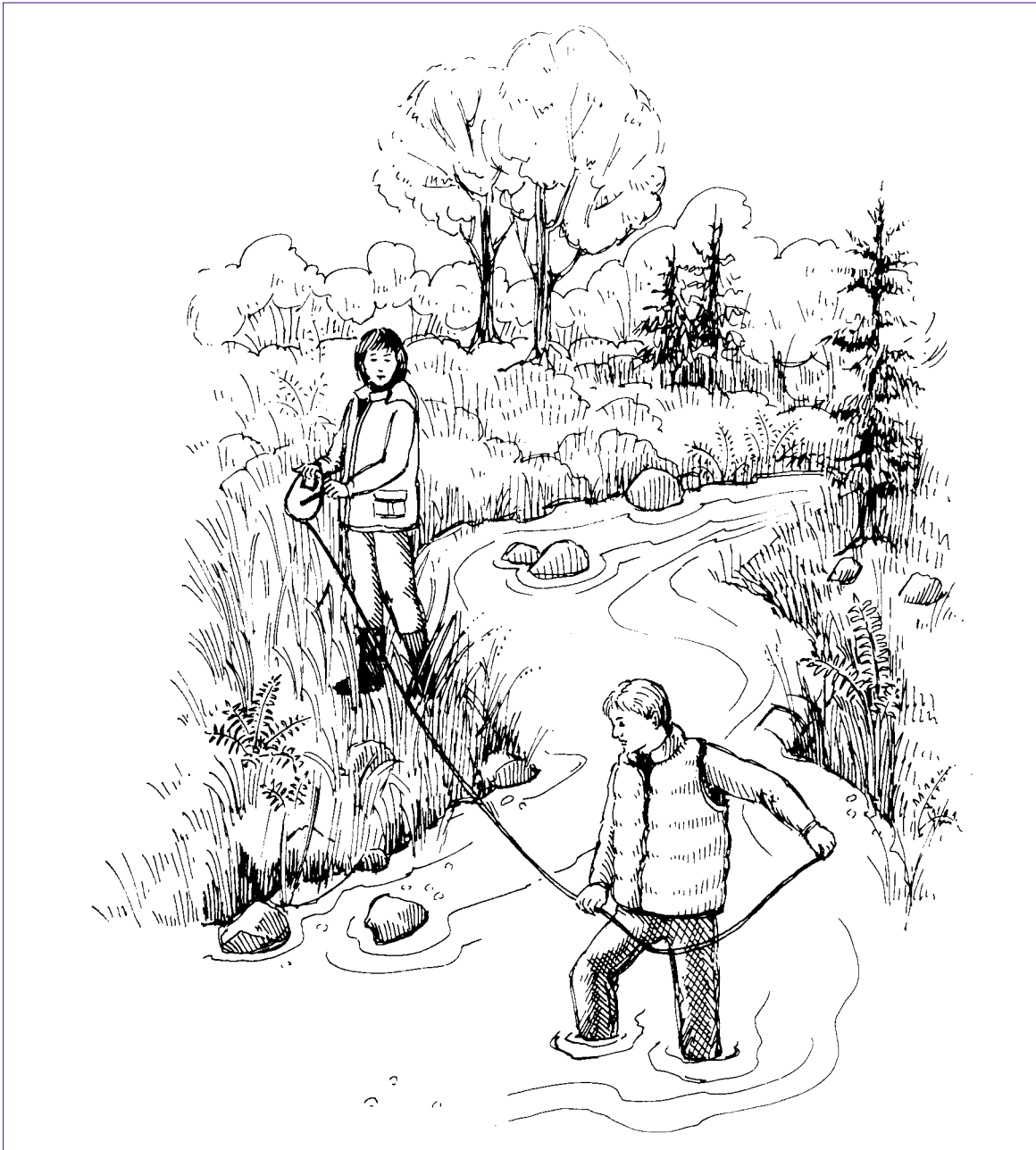


The Streamkeepers Handbook

*A
Practical
Guide To
Stream
And
Wetland
Care*



STREAMKEEPERS

***Module 10
Community
Awareness***



Project Approval Required	Training	Time Commitment (per year)	Number of People	Time of Year
no	Not necessary	A few days per project	2 to 4 to organize More to implement	Any time

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MODULE 10:

Community Awareness

Welcome to the Streamkeepers Program! The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Community Involvement Program provides these Streamkeepers training modules. These modules encourage “hands on” environmental activities in watersheds in British Columbia. Volunteer groups, schools, and individuals are using this material to monitor and restore local waterways. Your local Fisheries and Oceans Community Advisor can provide more information.

Acknowledgments

Mark Johnson (Community Advisor with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and Karen Munro provided information for this module.

Project Activity And Purpose

This module describes six projects that help you express concerns and provide information about watershed and stream health to other members of your community:

1. Road Signs
2. Brochures and Newsletters
3. Community Meetings
4. Public Displays
5. News Media
6. Media Productions

Consider your goals when you choose a project. Some community awareness projects inform a wide audience. Others target specific groups.

Introduction

Each of us has an obligation to help take care of our own environment. Community awareness projects remind people that aquatic habitats are important. When residents of a community are given enough information, they often support decisions about land use that protect the environment. Community awareness projects let people know how commonplace activities can damage aquatic habitats. Some projects provide information about environmentally friendly practices and products that help protect these natural resources.

Many common urban activities affect our streams. Property

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development, driving, car washing, and garden pesticide usually add sediment and contaminants to streams through runoff. The impact can be severe when an entire watershed is considered. There are few or no regulations for these non-point sources of pollution. Collectively, these activities often cause more damage than major developments. Various government agencies try to limit damage to the environment by regulating major urban, industrial, agricultural, forestry, and mining developments.

Public awareness projects can help heighten interest in current development proposals, land use decisions, and other activities that affect watersheds. Informed citizens are more likely to support your efforts and become involved in the local decision making process. Sometimes you may find yourself dealing with difficult issues, but you will draw more support for your cause if you can maintain a positive attitude.

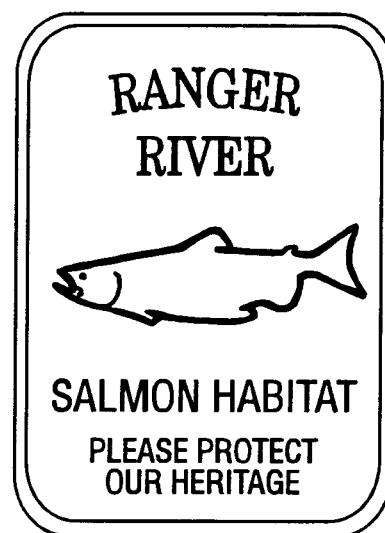
Established groups with well-defined goals and objectives can organize these projects most successfully. Such groups also have important contacts and resources within the community. There are several references at the end of this module that can guide you in organizing a Streamkeepers group.

Project Guidance And Approval

Contact your local Community Advisor for guidance and information before starting a major project. He or she can provide resources and contacts with government agencies or other groups already involved in watershed protection.

1. ROAD SIGNS

You can place signs at stream crossings. A simple sign that includes the stream name, a fish symbol, and a short conservation message is best. The signs draw attention to the streams as people pass. This is especially useful on a small or culverted stream, where there is no bridge to remind us of the stream visually. Many people do not realize that small headwater creeks are easily damaged yet provide important fish and wildlife habitats.



PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

Contact your municipality and the B.C. Ministry of Transportation Highways (MOTH) for approval and cooperation. Get permission from landowners, such as other agencies, private property owners, or First Nations Councils. Check for local guidelines on sign design and placement. These often differ from one jurisdiction to another.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

One or two people can organize project funding, agency assistance, and approval. You will need a larger crew if you wish to make and install the signs yourselves. You may need to plan for maintaining the signs after they are installed. Contacting the agencies and arranging for material and labour may involve two to three days of phone calls and letter writing. It may take up to two or three months to reach the stage of installing signs.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORKING CONDITIONS

You can build and install signs any time of year, depending on the weather. Be prepared to time your project to fit into the schedule of the Municipal Engineering Department or MOTH. You will probably rely on their resources and assistance.

SAFETY

Staff from the municipality or MOTH may install the signs. If your group installs or maintains the signs, make everyone aware of traffic safety. Park safely and wear traffic safety vests.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

60cm by 90cm, 30mm thick aluminum sign blank	
Fish decal	maps
Painted lettering	premixed concrete (20 kg)
Wheel barrow	water bucket
2.2m of 4" x 4" treated post	shovel
Cost: up to \$100 per sign	

PROCEDURE

Locate and map suitable sign locations. You may wish to start with the most crucial habitat areas or those that seem to suffer from regular abuse. Consider trails, foot bridges, culverts, and bridges.

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Decide how many signs you need. Plan to spread the work and expense over a few years if the project involves many signs.

Choose the size, text, colours, and materials for the sign. You may need to consider design guidelines provided for the jurisdiction where you are working. The Fraser River Action Plan has developed guidelines for consistent recognition of particular habitats. They suggest keeping the message simple and graphic:

- use green lettering and border on a white background

- use the yellow stylized salmon figure commonly used to represent salmonids

- use another colour and fish shape to represent other fish (for example, a blue stickleback), if there are on salmonids in the stream

- use a red fish if you want to emphasize an endangered species (for example, a red Salish Sucker)

- include a brief pictorial reference to habitat restoration or enhancement activities on the stream

- use a special symbol to denote environmentally sensitive areas

In many areas employees of the municipality or MOTH install signs. Decide who will be responsible for maintaining the signs before starting the project.

COLLECTING, REPORTING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

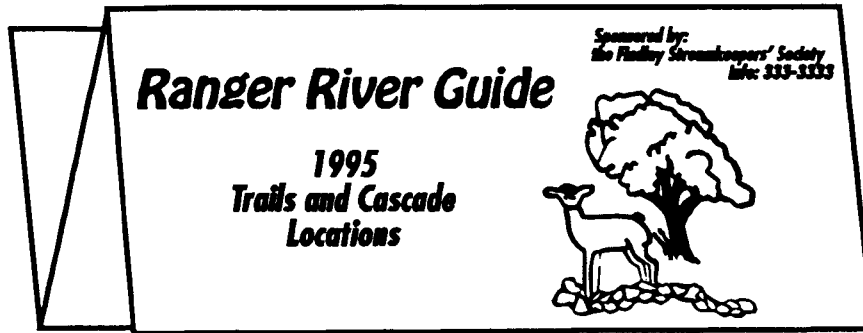
Keep an updated map of sign locations and future sites. Keep records of correspondence, approvals, costs, number of signs, and sign design. Send the Community Awareness Project Summary Sheet to the Streamkeepers Database. The current address is in the Handbook.

You can evaluate the success of your project by doing a stream cleanup before you install your signs and again some time later. Compare the different amounts of garbage collected each time.

2. BROCHURES AND NEWSLETTERS

You may wish to produce a brochure about your watershed or stream. A map of your area showing streams, roads, trails, and fish and wildlife distribution will interest the people in your community. Alternatively, you may wish to submit an article to a newsletter or even start your own.

Decide how to distribute the brochure or newsletter. Select a theme, collect the information, and design your brochure. Include a contact number for interested readers. Some brochures about watersheds and their resources may be available. Consult your Community Advisor.



PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

You need no formal approval. Various agencies may share experience and information, or even provide financial support.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

It may take as much as ten days to research and prepare the material, get printing estimates, and arrange for distribution.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORK CONDITIONS

The brochure or newsletter can be prepared any time, but avoid distributing it during holiday seasons when it is less likely to get the attention it deserves.

SAFETY

If you are delivering brochures in person, respect private property, leave dogs at home, supervise children, and watch for traffic.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

message and information

camera ready copy prepared to printers' specifications

cost: \$500 to \$2,000 for printing 1,000 to 10,000 copies

PROCEDURE

Choose the message, intended audience, number of copies, and the distribution method. Research and collect all the information, and be sure to check everything carefully. Organize your material.

You should include a title, the purpose of your brochure, objectives and goals of your group and name and phone number of a contact person. You may also want to include a watershed map, comments on the current state of the watershed, and a list of affiliated organizations.

Design an attractive brochure. You may wish to seek guidance

The Stewardship Series

from a professional desktop publisher. Always get someone else to proofread it. Get quotes from at least three printers. Use recycled paper and plan to print an initial run of 1,000 to 10,000 copies. Distribute the brochures through the mail, door to door, or in a “help yourself” rack.

COLLECTING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

Keep track of the costs, time involved, resources used, number of copies made, and distribution method. Record all responses to the brochure. You may want to conduct a poll of common environmental practices before you distribute the brochure, and again a year later, to evaluate the effectiveness of your campaign. If your brochure has a clear message, you will be able to evaluate its effectiveness more easily. Share this information with the Community Advisor. Send a copy of the Community Awareness Project Summary Sheet to the Streamkeepers Database. The Current address is in the Handbook

3. COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Public hearings, municipal council meetings, and service club meetings provide good opportunities to discuss local watershed issues. You and you group may want to attend, or present a brief at a meeting. You may want to organize a public meeting to raise your own concerns, inform people, and listen to community concerns about local issues. This is an excellent way to find active supporters and choose community based projects.

PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

You need no formal approval to organize a public meeting. Your Community Advisor has experience dealing with the public and can provide some guidance. You may wish to consult a professional about organizing the meeting.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

Meetings require preparation and organization. You need to develop and research items for the agenda, produce the notice, arrange a location, hold the meeting, and distribute minutes. All this may take five or six days.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORK CONDITIONS

Schedule your meeting for a weekday evening. Avoid statutory holidays, July and August, and major sporting and cultural events. Select a convenient location.

SAFETY

Community meetings can get quite heated. Watch what you say. You may get quoted!

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Meeting notice	stationary
Meeting room	audiovisual equipment
Refreshments	minutes
Chairperson, preferably experienced	
Cost: up to \$700	

PROCEDURE

Discuss the project with your group and the Community Advisor. Decide on a target audience and write down clear goals and objectives for the meeting. Arrange a meeting place, date, and time. Several references in this module provide suggestions for organizing meetings.

Prepare a notice that includes title, place, time, kind of meeting (information, training, problem solving), agenda, and contact person for further information. Distribute it by mail, fax, electronic mail, or community bulletin boards. Arrange for free announcements in the newspaper, on the radio, or on television.

Prepare your meeting place. Organize audiovisual equipment, seating, and refreshments.

Decide whether to make decisions by consensus or majority vote. Outline the basic ground rules and objectives of the meeting. Keep to the agenda and keep the meeting on time. Assign someone to record action points, deadlines, and relevant information. At the end, summarize action points and plans, inform everyone of any future meetings. Thank all the participants. Clean up the room.

Distribute minutes to all the participants. Confirm details with people who volunteered to take on specific tasks.

PUBLIC MEETING

at the Findlay Elks Hall, Smith St. and Shuster Ave.



The Ranger River:

an endangered species

**Wednesday,
February 23, 1995
7:00 - 9:00 pm**

topics include:

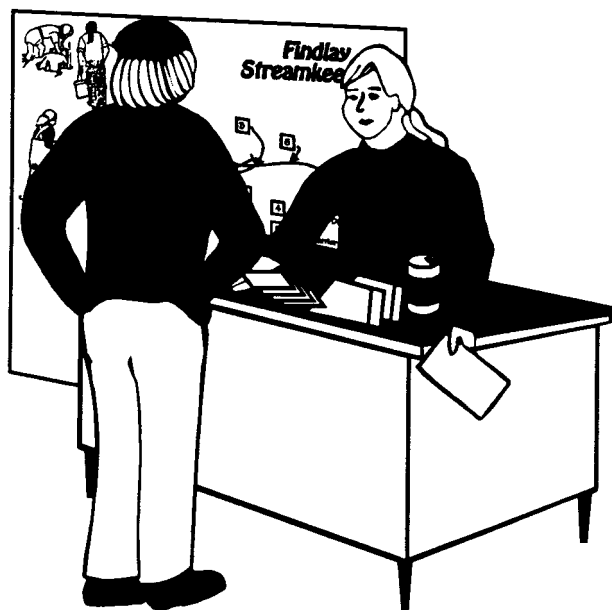
- preserving the swimming hole
- proposed housing developments
- a cleanup proposal
- the existing storm drain system

Info: 333-3333
Sponsored by: Findlay Streamkeepers' Society

COLLECTING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

Send copies of the meeting and minutes to the Community Advisor. Inform potentially affected businesses, government agencies, and citizens of any proposed actions that arise from the meeting.

4. PUBLIC DISPLAYS



You can organize material about your project and present it to the public in a display at a shopping mall, open house, or community festival.

PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

Approach event organizers or shopping mall administrators.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

This is an inexpensive and effective way to reach people and find new volunteers. You may need two to four days to collect photos, make posters, and arrange interesting display items. Arrange for a volunteer to stay at the display to provide information.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORK CONDITIONS

You can do this project any time of year. Tie it in with one of your other projects or a community event. Shopping malls have more time available at some times of year than others.

SAFETY

Be careful lifting heavy displays.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Poster material

Photos

Display items (equipment, waders, aquarium, etc.)

Tables, chairs, room dividers or display boards

Cost: \$100 to \$500 (more if the display is done by a professional)

PROCEDURE

Make arrangements with event organizers or shopping mall administrators well advance. Prepare an information sheet about the project that includes phone contacts. Organize materials for your display.

Set up and take down the display at hours convenient to the organizers. Have enthusiastic, well informed members of your group at the display. The display is only a prop to get people talking with your group. Put out a sign-up sheet for names and phone numbers of people interested in further information, or becoming volunteers.

COLLECTING, REPORTING, AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

Discuss the public response to the display with your group members. You may find new volunteers through your efforts.

5. NEWS MEDIA

Newspaper, radio and television coverage of your project gets your message to a larger audience and invites public recognition for your volunteers. Your work may educate or inspire others and you may gain new volunteers.

Reporters want a good story to interest their audience. Their job is not to provide you with free publicity. You need to interest a reporter in your project. Stress the newsworthy and interesting angles and the significance of your project to the community. Try to find a human interest angle or surprise element, such as the successful rehabilitation of an area, or the volunteers work of children. Your story should be positive and can tie in with other current issues or events. Provide a written summary or press release about your project to the reporter to avoid being misquoted.

PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

You need no approval.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

You may need time, effort and persistence to interest reporters in your story.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORK CONDITIONS

You can do this kind of work any time of year.

SAFETY

No particular safety guidelines apply, except to watch what you say. You can avoid misquotes by providing a written report to the reporter.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Press release with details of the project
Typewriter or computer.

PROCEDURE

Get to know the local environmental and be aware of deadlines and schedules in the media.

Newspapers: news papers often have limited staff available. Give lots of advance notice to advertise an event or arrange coverage of a cleanup or other activity. Remind them a few days before the event. Send a clipping and thank you note after the story is published. If necessary, correct any mistakes politely.

Press releases: a press release is a simple, accurate one page summary of your project. It tells who, what, when, where, why, how. Include project background, importance of the project, and contact people. A press release is useful for many projects, and busy reporters appreciate the concise information. Make sure someone proofreads it first. Hand deliver, fax, or mail the press release.

Public service announcements: local media sometimes provide space or time for free public service announcements from registered nonprofit organizations. They may prepare one for you or ask you to

supply it. A college communications class or advertising agency may be willing to provide free assistance.

Letters to the editor: this section of a newspaper provides a forum for opinions and information. It requires only a well-written letter.

Interviews: choose a strong spokesperson from your group who enjoys dealing with the media, is enthusiastic, and is well informed. Be prepared with

interesting quotes and a short summary. If you cannot answer a question, be honest about it and offer to get back to the reporter with the information later.



COLLECTING, REPORTING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

You may wish to survey community attitudes before and after a media campaign. Keep a record of responses from the public and save copies of all clippings for future reference.

6. MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

Your group can produce a slide show or short video about your project. Offer to show it to schools, clubs, parent councils, municipal committees, or engineering departments.

PROJECT GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL

You do not need approval, but you may wish to consult your Community Advisor or other groups for successful ideas.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

The project involves some time and effort. You probably can get some advice or assistance from the communications department of a community college or a community television station.

TIME OF YEAR AND WORK CONDITIONS

You can do this project any time of year.

SAFETY

No particular safety guidelines apply.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

summary sheet	camera
Film or video tape	script
Cost: as little as \$25	

PROCEDURE

Consider your intended audience. Choose a theme and strong images that relate to your topic. Organize your material and edit it well. Keep your presentation to twenty minutes or less. Most audiences have short attention spans. You may want to provide a short written summary. Be prepared to answer questions.

COLLECTING, REPORTING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

Listen for responses to your presentation.

General References and Resources

Anon. 1995. *Community Stewardship: A Guide to Establishing Your Own Community Group*. Copublished by Fraser Basin Management Program, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Wildlife Service and Watershed Working Group of Forest Renewal B.C., Canada.

BC Media Guide. 1990. Available free from the BC Government Communications Office (1-604-387-1337)

Bolling, D. M. 1994. *How to Save a River: A Handbook for Citizen Action*. Island Press, Washington, DC. 268 pp.

British Columbia Environmental Network Guide. *Grassroots Organizing: Getting Serious About Survival*. BCEN, Vancouver BC. Call 1-604-879-2279 for a copy.

Gross and Zimmerman. 1991. *Interpreter's Handbook Series*. VW-SP Foundation Press, Inc. Univ. Wisconsin, Stevens Point, WI. -Full ref from Mark Johnson

Fletcher, T. and J. Rockler. 1990. *Getting Publicity: A Do It Yourself Guide for Small Businesses and Non-profit Groups*. Self Council Press, Vancouver, BC. 144 pp.

Yates, S. 1988. *Adopting a Stream, A Northwest Handbook*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, Wa.

Check with the library for references on public speaking and running meetings.

send the data to the Streamkeepers Database

**MODULE 10:
COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECTS SUMMARY
SHEET**

(see Module 1 for additional information)

Stream Name	Date
Watershed code	NTS Map#
Organization name	Crew size
Contact name	Phone#

Stream Sign Information	
sign message	
number of signs installed	
Locations	

Brochure and Newsletter Information	
basic message	
number of copies made	
distribution methods	
distribution area	

The **Stewardship** Series