

NBWA Communication Plan

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Goal 1: Adopt communications strategies to support NBWA mission and goals

Intent: Increase targeted messaging about NBWA Mission and Goals and wiser use of NBWA resources in our communication efforts. **Budget:** Use current staff and volunteer time from Board members

Strategy:

- 1) Develop and implement a communications plan

Actions/schedule:

- 1) Develop a communications committee per Board direction
 - a. Hold first meeting in October
 - b. Hold a maximum of four meetings a year
- 2) Draft a communications plan for Board approval
 - a. Draft a plan with committee in October in 2016
 - b. Present plan for approval by Board in January 2017
- 3) Develop a budget to support the plan
 - a. Present budget for Board approval in 2017 at normal budget procedure
- 4) Develop staffing, responsibilities to implement the plan
 - a. Develop responsibilities in January 2017
- 5) Review and update the plan once a year
 - a. Committee to review plan and update in November of each year

Goal 2: Increase outreach and communications to youth by both direct NBWA work and by supporting our regional education outreach partners. **Budget: \$5,000.00**

Intent: Increase awareness about the value, health and issues of the NBWA watersheds and increase stewardship activities in these watersheds by school and community populations.

Strategies:

- 1) Work with NBWA partners to support and expand school education programs
- 2) Provide school, community tours of NBWA member systems/ facilities as an outreach tool
- 3) Provide in-school or external educational workshops or curriculum

Actions/schedule:

- 1) Develop a list of schools within the NBWA boundary by January 2017
- 2) Survey the existing youth and school outreach and education efforts already underway in the NBWA watersheds by January 2017

- a. Finalize survey by January 2017
- 3) Either as an NBWA effort or through existing partners, create a contest/scholarship annual program (Video contest, poster contest) meant to engage student interest in the NBWA watershed and stewardship activities.
 - a. Roll out program in July 2017
- 4) Develop a tour itinerary schedule/ feasibility map
 - a. Create tour plan by February 2017
- 5) Investigate funding needed for busing costs for schools to attend NBWA tours, events
 - a. Itemize busing costs per tour plan by July 2017
- 6) Investigate grant funding opportunities to support in-school or external workshops
 - a. Ongoing, concurrent with NBWA budget/grant process

Goal 3: Increase awareness about NBWA to its members and stakeholders

Intent: Work to strengthen the NBWA member organization's Board appointees and staff about the value of NBWA and increase the role of NBWA in highlighting the work and successes of the member organizations and to stakeholders in the wider water and conservation communities. **Budget:** Use current staff and volunteer time from Board members

Strategies:

- 1) Update and maintain a robust website
- 2) Develop a quarterly electronic newsletter
- 3) Support bi-annual conference which furthers the priorities of NBWA and the implementation of this Communication Plan

Actions/schedule:

- 1) Host, maintain and update website
 - a. Update website in October 2016
 - b. Review content quarterly with committee
 - c. Review social media possibilities for tie-in to the website and decide if any are worth initiating and maintaining. Recommendation to the Board on social media by January 2017.
- 2) Create a mail chimp or constant contact account
 - a. Secure account - DONE
 - b. Develop design template in January 2017
 - c. Develop content, featured stories quarterly
- 3) Identify recipients
 - a. Secure email database of recipients by January 2017
- 4) Distribute first electronic newsletter that showcases the programs and projects of the NBWA members and the organization.
 - a. January 2017
- 5) Develop communications plan for bi-annual conference

- a. Work with conference committee schedule to ensure sound communications strategies are implemented

Goal 4: Develop positive earned media opportunities for NBWA projects and its members

Intent: Increase public and elected official awareness of NBWA projects, events, announcements; package good work of NBWA and achieve higher recognition in the media of the organizations' and it's members projects and activities. **Budget:** undefined as yet

Strategies:

- 1) Build strong relationships with North Bay journalists covering water resources, government

Actions/schedule:

- 1) Build a North Bay media list
 - a. January 2017
- 2) Develop a media page on website
 - a. January 2017
- 3) Issue press releases on grant announcements, projects. As needed
- 4) Issue meeting and event announcements to local calendar editors. As needed
- 5) Editorial calendar – develop pitch calendar – ongoing
- 6) Issue meeting and event announcements to local calendar editors. As needed

Goal 5: Make speakers and presentations more available and known to the wider community.

Intent: Increase outreach to the North Bay public and communities so that the NBWA makes stronger use of the excellent information resources it has access to in the meetings and conferences. **Budget:** undefined as yet

Strategies:

- 1) Ensure that website improvements include easily accessible and approachable information from the monthly meetings and the biennial conference. Ongoing.
- 2) On years when there is not an NBWA conference, support a one-day or half-day symposium or workshop on a topic of concern and interest to the NBWA, the local water communities and the public. Plan for mid-2017
- 3) Work with member agencies to determine if those Boards would benefit from the NBWA speakers on topics of interest since most agency Board members do not attend monthly meetings. Survey the member General Managers. By March 2017.
- 4) Send a letter to all potential NBWA members to increase awareness and encourage membership in NBWA. March 2017

Appendix 1:
Comments on NBWA Communication Plan
Judy Schriebman

Are the Goals in prioritized order? Can or should they be?

Goal 1 is good. Do we have a consensus on what our messaging needs to be?

Goal 2 General Comments: While I agree that increasing our communication with youth is a laudable goal, youth and schools have a LOT on their plates and this is not as easy to break into as one might think. Kids are less focused on names and purposes of organizations and more on doing stuff. Which is why restoration activities and onsite tours have such a big impact. This goal needs to be honed down to the "do-able". As it currently is written, it is way too broad and out of our scope and capabilities.

Strategies #2: Provide school, community tours to support and expand school education programs.
This point needs to be clarified. I don't think NBWA has the bandwidth to give the tours but we can request our members to do so. I think NBWA could provide a web site for which agencies give tours, the educational content of the tour, and whom to contact to set these up. We can provide that information as a single point of contact for schools/educational partners.

Strategies #3: This is way outside what NBWA can and should do. As someone who has worked in the school system, they are *extremely* busy with state/fed/parental etc requirements. "Getting in" usually means developing personal relationships with a teacher or staffer who sees the value in what we can add to the curriculum. It also may be approved by Board of Education or be presented in a way that aligns with school and science standards, which adds another layer of time and complexity. Our asking schools how we could help them might be a better first approach. I also don't think we have the bandwidth to develop a full curriculum across multiple grade levels or provide in-school workshops but we CAN work with our educational partners (SLEWS, STRAW, Petaluma, etc) to increase our influence within their programs. Perhaps as a requirement for funding, we integrate our work within their program plan, wherever possible.

Action/Schedules #1: There are MANY schools within the NBWA boundary, or are we only going to focus on public schools? Charter schools? Alternate schools? It might be worth picking a smaller target (like middle school) and concentrate on that arena. Elementary, middle and high schools are very different animals and need different approaches to be successful. Schools are strapped for cash and time and often require an outside organization to print out anything to be distributed to students.

Action/Schedules #3: A contest or scholarship program is time intensive to get the word out, develop the interest in the school/student body, and then for a contest, we need to judge contest winners, do media outreach, etc. I would not do this as a first step. It would be worth talking to our educational partners active in the schools to get their thoughts on this or to see if we were to develop something, would they be able to bring it in? I have not found contests to be an effective way to get things done for the time invested. Social media/Survey monkey or creating an intern position (which could be done via MSEL at Terra Linda High School or similar program) might be a more cost effective and time effective way to do youth outreach.

Action/Schedules #6: There are a lot of grants out there but you need to know what you need a grant for. Again, I think talking with our educational partners on where they might need support or where they see the holes would be most useful as a starting point. This could be a goal for later.

Action/Schedules 2, 4, 5 are useful.

Goal 3: Good; Much of this we have done and should continue doing. NBWA brochure is good marketing tool for use at all forums/conferences/workshops held by NBWA or by member agencies.

Goal 4 is Very Important and should be higher in the list if we are prioritizing. We need to get ahead of the narrative or always be playing catch up. For example, we now need to inform people that water flowing down creeks and rivers and emptying into the bay and ocean is not “wasted” water. We need to develop short, effective talking points and/or write editorials for the local news that help the public understand these finer points.

All the strategies of Goal 4 look good. Does Point 5, Editorial Calendar, mean gearing up for writing a Letter to the Editor type piece on a regular basis? If so, I agree; if not, please clarify and add Point 7, regular letters to Ed for local papers.

Goal 5: Good. Again, NBWA brochure can be a great marketing tool to raise awareness. We also need to do better outreach to non-water, non-environmental agencies, public officials, staffers, commission members and public groups. Water connects everything but I find that Planners have little understanding even of well-developed LID techniques and ordinances (such as the need to keep trees in place when working on a slope), or for Roads and Drains (DPW) folks to truly understand why swales and rain gardens are helpful (and cement is not) and not just something extra they have to do.

All the strategies of Goal 5 look good.