



National Extension Water Outreach Education

Facilitating Access to Resources and Best Education Practices

Changing Public Behavior *with help from* Target Audience Research

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■ Changing Public Behavior?

- ◆ What are we trying to accomplish?
- ◆ Connect the situation with the people
- ◆ Why a target audience?
- ◆ Our research results & landowner example





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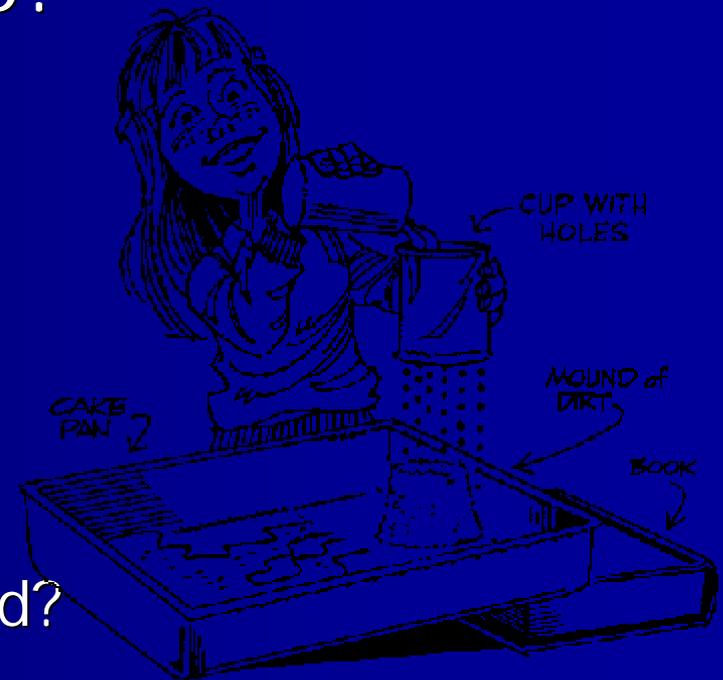
Facilitating Access to Resources and Best Education Practices

- What do natural resource educators do?
 - ◆ “Transfer” technical information to relevant audiences
 - What does “transferring information” actually accomplish?
 - How do we do it effectively?





- What do natural resource educators do?
 - ◆ Provide management tools and techniques
 - How do we “provide” tools and techniques?
 - Are we obligated to ensure that techniques are used, once provided?





- What do natural resource educators do?
 - ◆ Facilitate environmental decision-making
 - What kinds of decision-support resources are effective with a particular audience?
 - How do we objectively facilitate citizen decision processes?





- Educators can:
 - ◆ Define the **problem** in specific terms.
 - **Nutrients in the lake affect water clarity**



- Educators can:
 - ◆ Understand the **critical factors** that affect the likelihood that an individual will adopt an environmentally significant behavior.
 - “Dirty” water is not appealing to lake property owners



- Educators can:
 - ◆ Identify **behavior goals** that the targeted audience can achieve.
 - Plant and maintain effective riparian buffer strips



■ Educators can:

- ◆ Select **outreach techniques** most relevant for facilitating behavior change by a particular audience.
 - Offer neighborhood demonstrations
 - Showcase successful examples for how to reduce soil runoff into the lake by maintaining plant barriers



■ Educators can:

- ◆ Determine how to **measure** whether the individual achieved the behavior goal.
 - Call property owners, one month after event to learn more about their planting plans
 - Conduct a neighborhood water-edge parade of gardens, one year later

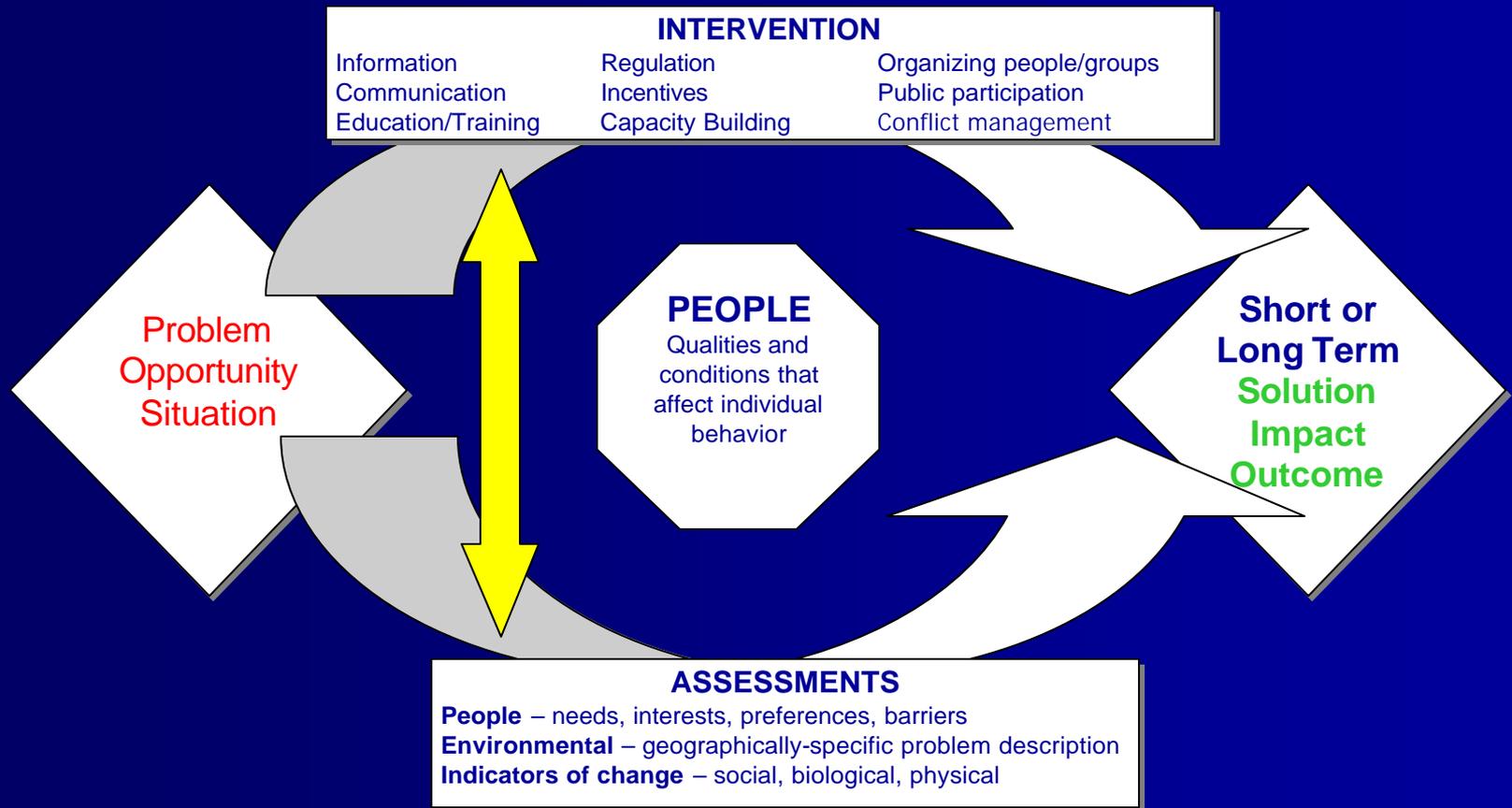


- The Water Outreach Education project
 - ◆ A collaboration of USDA CSREES and other public and private clean and safe water partners interested in answering the question:
 - Education and communication are important water management tools, but how do we do it well?



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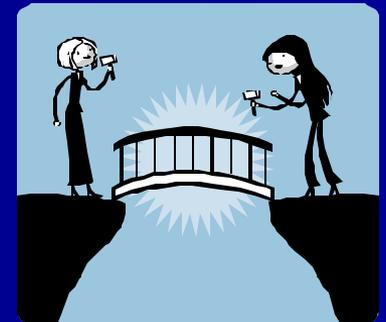




■ Target Audience Studies

◆ A project goal

- Provide information about *audiences* of strategic interest to water educators
- Identify outreach practices that are most likely to lead to *preferred* results





■ Target Audience Studies

- ◆ Focus on **B**est **E**ducation **P**ractices

- ◆ A **BEP** is an outreach or education **practice**:

- That leads to preferred results
- "that has been clearly defined, refined through repeated delivery, and supported by a substantial body of research" (Fedler, 2001)



■ What is a **target audience**?

◆ A segment of the population that:

- Has a **specific opportunity** to take action on the problem you have identified.
- Is **specifically affected** by the problem you have identified.



■ Target audience? EXAMPLE

◆ Lake neighborhood homeowners

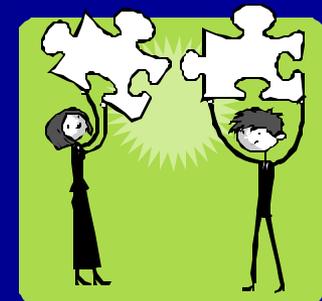
- Homeowners have a **specific opportunity** to reduce the amount of nutrients that get into waterways.
- Homeowners are **specifically affected** when the abundance of nutrients in the lake results in an unattractive recreational resource — **affecting** the quality of life in the neighborhood and for homeowners.



■ Using target audience information in outreach planning

◆ Where does it fit?

- Connecting the situation with the people
- Choosing achievable goals
- Selecting relevant outreach techniques





- Target audience **research findings**
 - ◆ Why do we provide them?
 - Encourage educators to assess their audiences; provide examples of questions and results
 - Give educators a head start on gathering information about a particular audience



- Target audience **research findings**
 - ◆ Why do we provide them?
 - Link audience information to specific outreach techniques found to be successful
 - Provide research references and suggestions for additional research



- The target audience research
 - ◆ Reviewed studies of water outreach and environmental education initiatives
 - 1988-2004
 - ◆ Developed
 - Criteria for identifying BEPs in the research
 - Systems for organizing and describing results



- Target audience study **results**
 - ◆ 117 relevant studies for 14 specialized audiences + 1 general audience
 - ◆ Results from 96 studies eventually included in study products and findings



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Target Audience	No	Target Audience	No
Adults	1	Local decision and policy makers,	4
Agricultural commodity groups	0	Loggers	2
Aquaculture producers	1	Neighborhood organizations	1
Environmental/conservation NGOs	0	Recreational water users	7
Farmers	41	Retailers of water recreation equipment	0
Government agency professionals	4	Service clubs	0
Homeowners	8	Soil and water conservation districts	0
Households	11	Specific ethnic groups	1
Industrial water users	6	Water-related recreational businesses	0
Landowners	10	Youth and college educators	9
Land development businesses	0	Youth and college students	11
		TOTAL	117

<http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/>



- Products you can use
 - ◆ Audience-specific education practices
 - Shown to be more effective
 - Corroborated by published research
 - Organized by outreach design component



- Products you can use
 - ◆ Audience-specific details for outreach design
 - Audience information
 - Message content
 - Message delivery
 - Outreach techniques
 - Role for public participation
 - Support for outreach professionals
 - Evaluation strategies and uses



- Products you can use
 - ◆ Audience-specific examples for classic education techniques [aka *Essential*]
 - For the individual
 - For the group
 - For web-based learning
 - For the community
 - For beyond the community





~ EXAMPLE ~

■ **Landowner** research summary

◆ **Message Content** BEPs

- Include information that shows
 - how the message affects landowners personally
 - what specific actions landowners can take to improve the situation
- Acknowledge landowner interest and concern for the quality of their land
- Provide regular feedback about how well goals and plans have been achieved



~ EXAMPLE ~

■ Summarizing BEPs for all audiences

◆ Message Content BEPs

- Specific content to convey
 - Cost savings or improved economic benefit
 - Ease of doing the right thing
 - Explicit instructions about what to do
 - The exact nature of the problem; what information is important to know and why



~ EXAMPLE ~

■ Summarizing BEPs for all audiences

◆ Message Content BEPs

- Content frame or perspective
 - Tailored to address specific audience circumstances
 - Easy to understand
 - From a trusted source
 - Up-to-date
 - Addressing each of these components rather than just one or two: attitudes, knowledge, intentions, behaviors



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Essential BEP	Audience-specific example
<p>The learning experience: Encourages the learner to set meaningful learning goals and to take personal responsibility for their own learning.</p>	<p>Landowner example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Include information that shows how the message affects landowners personally and what specific actions landowners can take to improve the situation



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Essential BEP	Audience-specific example
<p>The learning experience: Provides a <i>nurturing context</i>, with attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Cultural or group background and influences■ The physical environment■ The use of tools or practices appropriate to learner skills and abilities	<p>Landowner example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Trusted individuals can deliver messages effectively■ Emphasize an "integrated" program that provides a continuum of information, communication, and education resources



- Target audience study and resources
 - ◆ Water Outreach Education web site
 - <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu>

- Activities
 - ◆ Based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. 00-51130-9714, and by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension.