



Changing Public Behavior

Increase Citizen Involvement Using Target Audience Information

Project Summary

The Changing Public Behavior Project (CPB) trains scientists, natural resource professionals, and educators to develop and use target audience information to improve citizen understanding and involvement in community decision-making for water resources.

Project resources, developed with the advice of national leaders in training, education, and social sciences, include both in-person and Web-based training materials. Curriculum activities incorporate case studies that highlight priority water management themes and worksheets that encourage self-study and practice.

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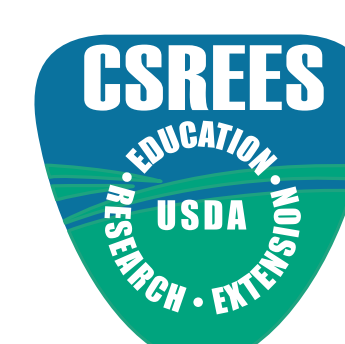
Situation

Extension's water management professionals are improving their understanding of target audiences. They want to use tested education and social science techniques to plan outreach programs that will encourage the public to adopt environmentally friendly habits.

Implementing outreach techniques that lead to measurable impacts is not a simple or straightforward process. Educators want to learn to apply social assessment processes to assure that their initiatives meet desired goals, and to create data for measuring water management impacts.

Funders of environmental outreach programs are increasingly demanding that efforts do in fact change behavior in a way that has a favorable impact on the environment. It is more important than ever for educators to have the skills needed to create effective programs and to be able to document that effectiveness in terms of producing behavior change.

<http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/CPBhomepage1.cfm>



Partners: Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Ohio State University, Utah State University, Washington State University, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. EPA, USDA Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring National Facilitation Project

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The Changing Public Behavior Project (CPB) is a national effort to improve citizen involvement in environmental stewardship by building educator skills.

CPB training resources increase educator skills and confidence in choosing outreach techniques that are most likely to lead to measurable and achievable results with a target audience.

Highlights of 2008 Activities

IN-PERSON TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Since January 2008, the project worked with national experts in social assessment and training, and with participants of five pilot workshops to review, test, and refine training resources. Participants were natural resources educators, managers, and administrators from Extension, public agencies, and non-government organizations. Workshops incorporate the presentation of background information, large and small group activities, case study examples, and online exploration of project resources. Participants are encouraged to work on their own project plans during practice sessions. Final drafts of workshop units and resources will be revised and published online in 2009.



In September 2008, Puget Sound water educators attended a CPB pilot workshop to work on applying social assessment strategies to outreach efforts like this monitoring event.

ONLINE TRAINING MODULE

The CPB Educator Self-Study Module, <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/SSModuleIntro.cfm>, describes a 7-step process for incorporating audience information into a water outreach initiative. It includes basic instructions, background material, worksheets, an assignment, and tips for evaluation. Feedback from the workshop participants was used to strengthen this resource as well.

CPB TRAINING EVALUATION

Pre-workshop surveys indicate how participants perceived their own strengths and weaknesses in applying education and social assessment techniques.

Results show participants want help with the following educator skills: Developing and implementing outreach activities that influence selected behaviors (79%); Using target audience information to assess the potential for behavior change (64%); and Monitoring (59%) and evaluating results (63%).

Respondents were most likely to want help with the following social assessment skills: Selecting a data gathering or social assessment procedure (72%); Applying a data gathering procedure (61%); Analyzing and summarizing results (60%); and Applying results (54%)

Formative evaluation surveys were conducted during and after the workshops to advise the project about specific training strategies and needs.

SELECTED IMPACTS FOR 2008:

- » Educators gained confidence in using target audience information to plan outreach strategies.
- » Resources were developed, including the self-study training module described above, and a searchable target audience database, <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/cpb/tad/index.cfm>
- » An in-person training curriculum was pilot tested with Extension natural resource professionals and agency administrators, receiving feedback from nearly 150 educators. Training worksheets, a self-assessment tool, and case study examples were developed to aid learners.
- » CPB education and social assessment resources were created in collaboration with federal agency (USDA/CSREES, U.S. FWS, U.S. Forest Service, EPA) and university partners.
- » Interest was created among Extension natural resource professionals for in-person trainings and for use of the CPB self-study module.
- » A Community of Practice for helping water management professionals improve outreach and education skills grew as a result of CPB project activities.

