

# Predator Conservation Alliance's Message Development Workshop

May 5-6, 2000  
Bozeman, Montana

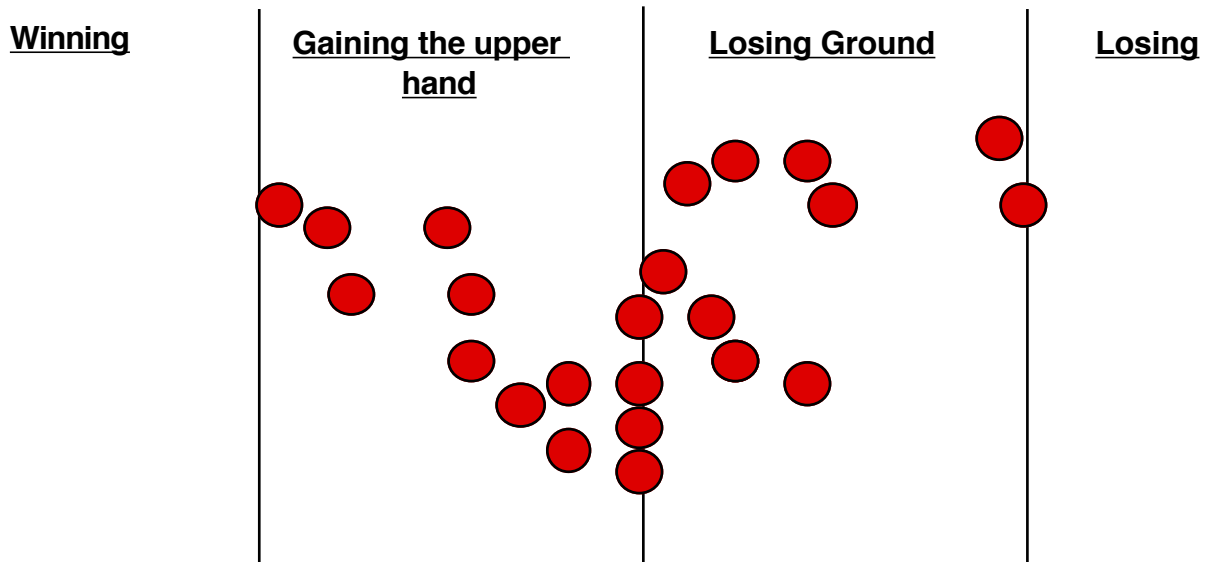
The workshop began with Alistair taking the participants through a process that would help set the framework for the remainder of the workshop. The purpose of this exercise was to identify the pros and cons of how this group perceives the ecological status and social acceptance of predators, and take these perspectives and transpose them to larger context for envisioning how we want to communicate about predators.

He asked the participants to write down ideas or phrases when answering various questions. These pictures, Alistair conveyed, will enable us more clearly see and understand how we communicate about these species and their important role, and how that contrasts with what we want to be conveying to the public. He asked us specifically, what is it we want to be striving for when communicating about predators, why aren't we there yet, and what are we using that is working toward our goals and what areas need improvement.

For the first exercise, Alistair provided each participant with a dot and asked, "Do you think we are winning, gaining the upper hand, losing ground, or losing the battle to protect predators in the Northern Rockies" (Northern Rockies was defined in a broad context to include Canada).

## In The Battle To Preserve Predators In the Northern Rockies

Are We :



After the participants placed their dots, Alistair asked the group various questions to help create the picture of where we thought we stood in communicating about predators.

### **What causes you to be optimistic?**

- less poisoning of predators on some landscapes
- more understanding of the role of predators
- we have wolves on the ground in Yellowstone
- improved public perception of predators
- more science describing the role of predators
- predators are more adaptable than we thought
- efforts to teach people to live with predators
- more press attention
- people care about how predators are perceived
- general public support for ESA
- more of the public appreciating ecosystems
- more understanding of issues on a continental scale
- less economic dependence
- there are advocacy organizations
- recent decision to rid snowmobiles in National Parks

## **What is darkening the picture?**

- literal loss of ground and connectivity to growth and development
- economic demand for predator parts (i.e. bear gall bladders)
- the role and value of predators is still not well enough understood by the public
- better organized/funded opposition
- we are not mobilizing the silent majority
- too many people disconnected from the land
- lack of effective myth busting
- insufficient support from government agencies
- ESA getting weaker twisted and modified
- backlash and fear-mongering by opposition creates negative political climate (especially in intermountain west)
- we have the burden of proof when it comes to arguing for protection; opposite of "cautionary principle"
- rise in use of public lands for recreation i.e. motorized recreation in the backcountry
- rise in lobbying by recreationists
- opposition is defining us, is better organized, and is using systems to achieve goals
- unfounded fear mongering of predators
- opposition is very good at emotional arguments
- immediate backlash to any steps forward
- state legislatures have those that oppose predators
- complete inconsistency across jurisdictional boundaries
- increasing number of states now requiring 2/3rds majority
- still legal hunting and trapping
- Animal Damage Control still occurs
- small core of advocates are getting pulled in too many directions
- groups and agencies not working together

## **Communicating about predators in the Northern Rockies**

### What are we proud of?

- we are seeing more ethical treatment of animals and changes in human behavior
- a sense of humility towards the natural world is developing
- we are seeing a change in human's behavior (e.g. keep out bear garbage containers, non-lethal responses)
- there is better appreciation of nature among young people
- we are not only able to translate science, but it is providing a common language to discuss and better understand predator issues
- we are using a broader diversity of messengers

- more collaboration with non-traditional conservationists
- increased discussions about predators as a group, not just individual species
- we are seeing an increased understanding of predators'role
- we are appealing to a broader public by incorporating broader values.
- an expanding base of knowledge about predators
- more emotional imagery and language
- there is better understanding of the role of predators by the general public
- improved communication and education; messages and distribution are more effective and sophisticated. Electronic communications are also more effective and efficient
- wolf reintroductions are mobilizing public support
- lynx listed
- the media generated by Predator Conservation Alliance's ORV survey

#### What areas need improvement ?

- we need new, more diverse trusted messengers – folks from outside the core movement
- we need to turn experts into on-message advocates
- we need to simplify our messages
- we need to develop consistent message-connect to broader themes
- we need more messages about value of keystone species; ecosystems and connectivity
- we need to articulate that people and predators can co-exist and how
- we need to unite all people in a common message
- we need to increase the emotional content in messages
- we need to debunk the western myths
- we need to broaden education efforts especially with non-charismatic predators and role of predators
- we need to better define our audience so we can motivate the converted and reach the fence-sitters
- we need to use economic, social and cultural arguments to broaden our appeal
- we need to improve the image of predators and the groups advocating on their behalf
- we need to improve our image
- we need to better define our target audiences
- we need to outreach to non-traditional allies and go beyond talking to the converted (hunters, anglers, ranchers, kids)
- we need to focus our work and provide amongst groups
- we need to increase the public's understanding of the role and value of predators
- we need to know more about our opposition and why and how they think;

<b>BHAGs</b> <b>Big Hairy Audacious Goals</b>
--

The purpose of this next exercise was to get the group to develop visionary goals on how we want to be communicating about predators. Alistair had the participants break into five groups and come up with two goals the group believed embraces our long-term vision for predators. Here are the BHAG's the group developed.

\*\*\* Broad public appreciation and value of predators' role in healthy, functioning ecosystems.

\*\*\* Media and elected officials are strong predator advocates

\*\*\* Predators appreciated in "pop" culture; predators are no longer a dirty word, pro-predator messages in AM talk radio, churches, etc

\*\*\* Weave appreciation of ecosystem importance into mainstream public consciousness

\*\*\* Cultural paradigm = Predators are assets, not liabilities

\*\*\* Commitment to predators so pervasive that unexpected and rural people come forward with pro-predator support (messages, decisions)

\*\*\* President supports predators in State-Of-The-Union Address

\*\*\* Dramatically increased funding for national media (full page newspaper ads, television, etc) on predators

\*\*\* It is as socially unacceptable to be anti-predator as it is to drive drunk or smoke in public

\*\*\* When we say "predators" every person in North America hears "wildland health"

### General Comments

In meeting our goals we need to determine who it is that we concentrate our message on, the 10% who already oppose us, or the 90% who strongly support us? Some participants made the argument that ranching is key to Montana and we must address the last 10% who do not support our cause, while others said it was a waste of time and we should focus on our broad support. Celinda made the comment that perhaps we should ask the question, "How *much* do we want to address the 10% who have concerns or don't support you?"

## Consultants Presentations

This next section gave the consultants an opportunity to present some of their research, provide an analysis of how we are communicating today, and identify how conservation groups and the opposition talk about themselves and the issues.

Before the presentations, John stressed that now, more than ever before, we must be very targeted and strategic in delivering our messages. Here is why: Three years ago, Paul Ray of American Lives, did a study that said the average American receives 20,000 messages a week from television and radio ads, bumper stickers, newspapers, billboards etc. Today, with the Internet and technological advances, this number is probably much higher.

### Understanding attitudes and beliefs; Human dimensions research

Dr. Alistair Bath

Alistair's human dimensions research examines attitudes, knowledge levels, motivations, expectations, and the nature of conflicts.

Alistair began his presentation by showing a slide of a meadow with a beautiful forest and mountains in the background. He asked the participants what they saw? Workshop participants replied "habitat", "mountains, forest, and a lush meadow." Alistair said that someone else might just as easily see a resource to be mined or logged; a means to stir the local economy. He made the point that we all have different perceptions. To get people on our side we must first understand their perceptions, before we can change them. We must first go in listening, he suggested, before we talk.

#### Resource Management and Human dimensions

Alistair said that resource issues are about human dimensions. When addressing a management issue you must not only look at the biophysical biology but also mandates, legislation, beliefs, economics, and politics. You must also consider that these various factors occur over a local, regional, or national scale. When we target messages we must consider how they can cross both spatial and temperate scales. When managing wildlife we must try to understand both people and the animals. Everything in "wildlife management" is actually done for people.

#### Emotion and fact; two important factors in crafting messages

Species cause strong emotions in many people – emotions that we can understand and, in turn, affect. When we talk about carnivores, we need to know and understand the public values about them.

When crafting a message there are two basic motivators, *emotions and facts*. While emotions are effective at quickly changing someone's perception, that change is usually short lived. A factual message (e.g. the science of predators) is more difficult to use and must be repeated more frequently, but the change in perception usually lasts longer. A combination of both approaches -emotion with fact- is most effective. For example, an initial study of public attitudes on the slaughter of seals in

Canada showed that the majority of the public was opposed after seeing emotional pictures of the slaughtered seals. Public opinion shifted subsequent to a campaign that ran factual information about the huge numbers of seals and multi-use of the carcass parts. We learned that factual information in this case effectively changed attitudes.

### How to identify what messages need to be delivered and how to evaluate them

In developing effective messages about carnivores, you must first identify what people already know about them. You don't want to tell them what they already know, instead you want to deliver messages that will correct misperceptions; helping change their beliefs and get them on your side.

In a "knowledge item survey" about wolves in Yellowstone, Alistair found that the majority of people are correct about facts like wolves defending territory, killing livestock, prey base, average pack size, and weight. But the percentage of correct answers decreases as questions deal with popular myths about wolves, like attacks on humans, population numbers, and whether the population was increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same.

When examining an audience, a "knowledge item survey" is a good way to gauge what your audience knows and what myths may be operating.

The average American receives 20,000 messages a week from TV, radio, bumper stickers, newspaper, billboards etc. To affect peoples perception and attitudes we must understand their perceptions; what they know, their expectations and motivations.

Alistair takes a message or campaign or program and looks for cause and effect through quantitative and research oriented methods. Once his research is completed he can determine from the results what factors (messages or facts) can affect attitudes and beliefs.

For example, Alistair looked at attitudes on wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone. Visitors to national parks are highly educated: many have a college education. The potential cost of the wolf reintroduction program was a major factor in people's lack of support for it. Once Defenders of Wildlife took that argument off the table by offering to compensate for livestock losses, they no longer had strong objections.

Also in the case of wolf reintroduction, the majority of people in MT, WY, and ID were in favor of wolves, but there was a rash of negative media (like with the Yellowstone fires) that gave the impression that there was greater public opposition than actually existed.

Our opposition has and uses competing emotional images to great effect (we have cute wolf pups; they have gory calves, deer and elk fawns that have been attacked). Pictures can get your audience to think in a certain way and they are very effective in changing attitudes. It is important to use pictures in context. A picture of a dead bear is one message, but a picture of a dead bear next to a hunter is an entirely different one.

In a recent study of public attitudes of wolves in Croatia, Alistair learned that attitudes were effected depending on what interest group you belonged to and what location or (vegetation type) you lived in. He reminded us that we need to be sensitive to looking at various characteristics that might affect attitudes.

He also found that if you can take people out into wilderness areas and show them, for example, a wolf den, you can change public attitudes and raise public awareness.

But educating people means giving the *right* messages. You need to involve the public in decision-making and understand the nature of conflicts.

There are four areas where conflict arises.

1. **Cognitive:** One example might be when two people disagree over the number of wolves.
2. **Values:** You may agree on the numbers, but one person thinks jobs are more important than wolves.
3. **Costs/Benefits:** You may agree on the numbers and that wolves should be protected, but you disagree on how it will impact businesses.
4. **Behavior:** You may agree on the numbers, wolf protection, costs, but one person doesn't like the other for whatever reason.

You need to know the nature of the conflict before you can resolve it.

Human dimensions involves environmental education, attitude assessment and monitoring, economic valuing, understanding trade-offs, and understanding behavior – resulting in what is essentially a redistribution of power from the managers to the public. There are cognitive aspects, values, personal behavior agreements and conflicts involved.

We need to identify the public involved, and define an attitude spectrum. Pay particular attention to what we call the “players”. Avoid the word “stakeholders” as it presumes conflict and territory. “Partners” or “neighbors” is more inclusive and highlights cooperation. By bringing people together to share values, we can make progress.

Alistair suggested the following ways to resolve conflict:

- √ Involve the public early in decision-making process.
- √ Be pro-active; don't wait for conflict to arise.
- √ Listen to those with opposing views and repeat to them what you heard.

Some quick last reminders

Large carnivore management needs a little bit of magic; a little bit of luck; balance of points of view; it will take a lot of talking; a lot of writing; you can get into a trap; cooperative work and shaking hands can make a difference; but, don't quit too early because carnivore management is loaded.



## Current public opinion trends

Celinda Lake

Before Celinda presented her research, she wanted to give the participants four important facts.

- 1. *The broad currents of public opinion are in your favor.*** We need to ask ourselves why we aren't harnessing this strong public support more effectively. We already have the majority of the American public on our side. We don't need to change anyone's attitudes to win - we just need to motivate those who are on our side. Other social movements would clearly envy this kind of strong support.
- 2. *You don't have to move a single voter or attitude.*** The data shows the public is solidly on our side, especially in this region.
- 3. *Your message has too many points and you're spread on too many fronts.*** You don't have to educate the public on every single point. For example, my research shows that the public does not think the environment costs jobs. There are other issues that maybe we don't need to argue, just say you they are right and move on to the issues you want to address. In other words, we need to choose points that we know we can win resoundingly on, and ignore the points that we can't.
- 4. *We don't need to educate the public on everything we know.*** Our message must be dynamic – not static – it must be addressed to the future not the past. We need to chose a few things to mobilize the public and focus our attention there. 70 to 90% of the public in the western United States knows about wolf introduction, but they are very confused about the numbers and distribution.

### Strong public support

Celinda summarized her relevant and recent data.

- √ The public is incredibly concerned about the environment as we come into the 21st century. 47% say they give to environmental groups.
- √ The public, especially women, are concerned about the loss of wild places, They are committed to seeing public land and wildlife protected for future generations.
- √ The public believes that good environmental quality brings jobs. Everyone feels that tourism will be the leading employer and economic force 5 years from now.
- √ The public is very concerned about the quality of life, particularly in this region. This is an excellent opportunity to attach your issue to their concerns. There is a lot of nostalgia among most Montanans and you should be at the center of it.

Wolves, grizzly bears, mountain lions are not attached to the icons of the American West and quality of life.

That communication is not happening and my question is why?

*Celinda Lake*

- √ The role of the environment in quality of life is very important to Americans, but you need to attach predators to that value.
- √ The majority of Americans do not consider agriculture to be a significant component of our economy. There are some considerations (like Fido getting eaten by wolves) that we should address quickly and sympathetically, and then move on (don't dwell on it...)

We do not need to move a single voter in this area or change an attitude to generate a majority.

*Celinda Lake*

Below are three values you should be making connections to that can give you broader appeal, especially in Montana:

1. ***The mysticism of Montana;*** The call of the wild. You should be attaching your values to this value and it should not be that difficult. One of values people place on the west is this sense of freedom. Your issue should work right into this value and work in your favor.
2. ***Moderation and balance;*** People want balance. Environmentalists are viewed as being single-minded, extremist, and one-sided. We need to reclaim the idea of "balance" for our own argument and reframe ourselves as reasonable people!
3. ***Habitat and ecosystem ;*** We need to reinforce the notion that we can live with them. It is very productive to argue for the charismatic creatures to make the point and draw attention to the value of whole ecosystems or the other issues you are addressing. We need to make the connection between quality of life, the protection of wild places, and these species. Also, you should link to public access and the idea of a historical public value, and keeping that value intact.

## Weaknesses that undermine our message

√ ***Fear of predators;*** One of our primary audiences, women, is fear averse. We can't deny this fear without seeming dismissive. Don't deny it, don't argue it, affirm it. You should take their fear regarding their children, pets, and livestock very seriously. Let them know you are taking steps to address their fears.

√ ***Lack of mitigation;*** We need to be sympathetic to the costs of those affected by predators. Two thirds of the public support a policy to reimburse ranchers. Public concerns were halved when we mentioned that ranchers would be compensated for their losses. We need to have a defensive strategy for arguments like big game losses.

√ ***Support for wildlife management;*** The public supports and trusts agencies managing wildlife.

√ ***Rights for private property owners;*** These rights are strongly supported as are acts to defend them. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the public support ranchers shooting wolves to protect livestock. We should not be taking on private property rights, but instead valuing it.

√ ***Unwillingness to accept behavior changes;*** People are not eager to modify their behavior. They do, however, value stewardship and responsibility.

√ ***The loss of access;*** This is a huge concern in the west, but responsible use or the notion that everything has its place, is accepted. We too should be talking about these broader public values and capitalize on these concerns.

√ ***Poor perception of environmentalists;*** Most people believe environmentalists are from out of state, and therefore, don't have a real investment in place.

## Crafting effective messages

Peter Fenn

The most difficult challenge for my clients is to identify what their messages are. Given the enormous number of messages people are faced with every day, one of the most important things to remember is to simplify. For example, in a recent initiative campaign that addressed both banning traps and reforming the fish and game commission, our message was simple and clear. We directed our message to the public on the trapping issue, and we stayed clear of the confusing messages about reform.

At the same time, you need to consider not only what constitutes a good message, but who should be targeted. What we might consider to be a good message for us (communicating what we're trying to accomplish and why) may NOT be for the audiences we're targeting.

With predators we are faced with a difficult task: we need a good strong simple message for a complicated issue. Particularly when dealing with an issue that's not front and center, we need to be extra-vigilant about simplifying the message we're trying to relay to the public. It's so difficult for us to put ideas into bumper sticker form, but that's what we need to aspire to. Walter Cronkite said that the average sound bite in the 1960s was 38 seconds; today, it's 8 seconds!

Walter Cronkite said that the average sound bite  
in the 1960s was 38 seconds; today, it's 8 seconds!

We have less time to get across more information.

*Peter Fenn*

Peter provided participants with 7 "C's" to keep in mind when creating messages. We need to remind ourselves how complex our issues are when we are writing, and try to simplify that complexity, and come to a good, strong, simple message.

### 7 "C's" in Crafting A Message

1. Clear - Avoid phrases no one understands, don't use jargon, make it uncomplicated.
2. Concise – Most good messages are less than a paragraph. You can have back up data.
3. Connect - Strike a responsive chord with target audience.
4. Colorful - Make it memorable, unique, and stand out with voters.
5. Contrasting - Give a strong sense of what you're *for*, in contrast to your opponent
6. Convincing –It must make sense and move people.
7. Continual – Repeat, repeat, repeat. The biggest mistake is when we find a good message we slap it on a brochure and then we never use it again.

To craft effective messages we must first understand the strengths and weaknesses of both sides of the issues messages. Peter facilitated a brainstorm session to help participants better understand their messages as well as the opponents'.

## **Our strengths**

Being right (truth and justice)	Emotional pitches
Excellent visuals	Voter support
Personal experiences are powerful	Reverence for life
Quality of life	Legacy for children
Fear of change (growth, sprawl)	Knowledge of history
Religious/biblical rationale (stewardship)	
Organized religious community to tap into	
Integrity, core appeal of the Northern Rockies	
Strong cultural and social icons (western/animal)	
"21st century effect"/ concern about legacy, quality of life	
Power of an older western mythology; Lewis and Clark, Native American	

## **Our weaknesses**

Fear  
No quick economic return (what we want costs \$)  
Support is widespread but thin, opponents are few but DEEP  
We're "conservative" in talking about limits and capacity  
We don't want to be perceived as radical  
Those most affected by predators are also the most negative  
We are not as focused as we need to be with limited \$ resources  
We have a lot of education to do on issues  
There's so much complexity and unpredictability in the species themselves  
Our target audience is risk-averse  
Lack of creativity in mobilizing support  
The idea of predators as restricting freedom  
The need to change some existing behaviors  
Lack of demographic diversity in our supporters  
Difficult to change perceptions of what is desirable/good, or what is actually going on  
Too much preaching to the choir; we talk to each other too much  
We have both too much and too little science - the burden of proof falls on us

## **Opponents' Strengths**

Credibility with the public	No shame!
Simple, colorful emotional message	Existing power structure
Inertia, benefit of the perceived status quo	Money
Political power at the current time	Good access to opinion-makers
They don't need proof (hold truth)	Simpler, sound bite messages
Very united front, single message	Economic argument - loss of jobs
They have experts, too – science is for sale!	Good at shifting blame
Increasing skill at co-opting our language	

Closed decision making "A stacked deck"  
Strong visuals (attacks on people, livestock and pets)  
Good use of anecdotal stories/evidence and human interest stories  
Idea of manifest destiny/human superiority over other species  
Espouse community and family values and individual rights  
Not labeled, lumped together, or pigeonholed in public mind

### Opponents' Weaknesses

Easy to faction, play against each other	Predictable, slow to evolve
They are in minority, and weakening	Leadership is vocal (???)
Not sustainable (their systems)	Subsidized ("welfare")
Fear mongering isn't sustainable over time	They're wrong
Not searching for real solutions	Hypocrisy
Focused on immediate gain, no long-term vision	Selfish, self-interested
Easy to document their negative impacts	Not cutting edge
Selective historical memory, focus on idealized past	
Succumb to conspiracy theories	
Dirty \$ from big business, multinationals	

### How we talk about ourselves and the issues

John Lamson

During the presentation, John displayed various full-page ads, critiqued press releases, and showed several emotional campaign video clips. John's presentation allowed participants to see first hand the pitfalls that many people fall into when crafting messages. He also provided excellent examples of how messages can be effective when written and delivered well.

Writing the title of a press release was one area John saw room for improvement. The press release headlines he read from PCA suggested that we can file lawsuits, hold protests, and attend conferences/meetings, but they reinforced the image that we're whiny, litigious environmentalists who only talk to ourselves and don't care about other people. Facts are NOT messages – emotions are the headline, facts are the story. For example, predators are the headline, habitat is the story.

By writing messages in this manner we define the issue in terms of our weaknesses, allowing the opposition to define and reinforce this image of us in their own communications.

When writing press release headlines

Facts are **not** message, emotions are the headline, facts are the story.

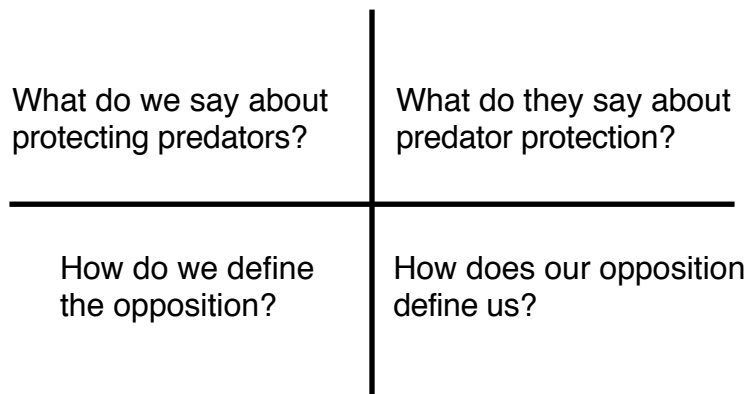
*John Lamson*

John urged participants to promote ourselves, our successes, especially the human angle of our successes even if they are not specifically issue oriented. “Against all odds, wolf # 9 has had pups.” He encouraged us to broaden our press coverage beyond just process. Example: instead of headlines with facts (“we filed a lawsuit”, “there is a comment deadline”), John suggested we think more in terms of stories with appeal to human emotions. These emotions become our message, with facts as support. This allows us to go on the offense, and prevent reader from identifying with our opposition.

What we're talking about is power, John said, and the way power is exercised is through people. Do the necessary research on message, use their own words against them, attack the other side, call them on their claims; they say. . . but . . . .

John utilizes a Mapping/Message Grid in political campaigns to help identify what opposing sides are saying about each other and about themselves. Listed below are the results of the message grid John took the group through regarding how we go about protecting predators.

### The Mapping/ Message Grid



#### What do we say about protecting predators?

- They help create healthy ecosystems
- They have a right to exist
- They symbolize wildness
- They increase our quality of life
- They are threatened because....
- "Because its the law"
- "It's in your interest"
- The public wants them protected
- As Americans, we should be big enough to share a little space
- I enjoy them and the next generation has a right to
- We are righting a wrong, restoring a balance

## **What does the opposition say about protecting predators?**

They are decimating ungulate herds  
Threat to human safety, esp. kids  
They don't belong here  
We don't raise cows to feed wolves  
They are a lifestyle threat  
There's not enough habitat  
They cause economic hardship  
They restrict access to our lands  
They are a threat to wildlife/endangered species  
Protection is expensive  
How many do we really need/want?  
They're doing okay, they're doing the best they have in years, and they don't need our help  
They won't stay where they're put

## **How does the opposition define us?**

We care more about animals than people  
We are locking out the people  
We are all elitist  
First we're going to take away they're land, then what next?  
We're urban enviros who don't understand nature  
In cahoots with heavy-handed big government  
Wealthy enviros who get money from somewhere else  
Radical hippies  
Extremist/Animal Rights/Vegetarians  
Hypocritical  
We're trying to put them out of business  
We don't care about safety  
We don't care about families, people, or economics  
We don't care about deer (poor Bambi)  
We don't respect private property rights  
We use emotional rhetoric all the time  
We don't care about animals: we're cruel to let elk be killed by wolves

## **How do we talk about the opposition?**

Sometimes they're right.... but  
They are out for their own interests  
They distort the facts  
They are extremists - narrow minded and the minority  
Afraid to have restrictions  
They exaggerate  
Ranching is not pro-family; big business; not Montanans



## **Defining our opposition: who are they?**

Farm Bureau  
Extraction Companies  
Some hunters  
Stockgrowers  
Republicans and some democrats  
Local, state and federal agencies  
Motorized vehicles  
Timber Companies  
Developers

## **How do we tell our story?**

- 1) Define the opposition: who's the bad guy or the embodied threat? The opposition needs a face, a reputation, a record, and a financial motive. We need to do research on the opposition, use their own words to attack them. What are their records, where does their money come from, what do they say when they think we're not watching? Who's responsible and how do we make them accountable?
- 2) Who are the good guys? What are the success stories?  
We need to bring about a shift in public support of predators that will make shooting wolves unacceptable. Ultimately, we want a mix of bad guys and good news in our communications – but to start, we should focus on just one or the other in the communication.

### General Comments

We should provide “hats off” awards to people who are part of our landscape – ranchers, developers, agency people who are doing the right thing.

We cannot underestimate the power of images – we might not want to personalize the opposition with a face all the time, especially our heroes.

How do we get some of these issues onto ballots, and how do we determine when it's a fight we are able to win?

As wildlife activists, we need to get out and start working on political campaigns.  
We can't expect politicians to be on our side, if we're never on theirs.

## Case Studies

This next section was structured to give the participants the opportunity to focus discussion around commonly faced and challenging issues. The first case study we attempted to talk about strategy and then decided to do a role play. The ideas and feedback from these case studies are synthesized below.

### Desired Outcome

City of Hamilton passes resolution (or remains neutral) that it is safe to conduct grizzly bear reintroduction.

### Messages - Our Side

We can live with bears  
Grizzlies define Montana and make it great  
Bears are wild animals who like to be secretive  
Go after opponent's economic self interest  
People have lived with bears always  
Bears bring in money  
In protecting bears we protect the land and what we value  
Bears only a problem when timber is cut unsustainable and then drives them out of their habitat.  
Part of quality of Montana and Yellowstone

### Priority audiences to target

City Council, urban	Editorial Boards and Media
Residents, public	Individual businesses
Moms	Opinion Leaders
Recreationists	Wildlife Managers

### Other audiences not seen as a top priority

Ranching and Agriculture  
Sheriff and Police Chief  
Chamber of Commerce  
School Boards  
Outfitters (horse, river, etc)  
Real Estate Board

### Allies

Some Rec. Clubs	National Public Radio
Local Scientists	Some hunters
Friends of Bitterroot	Radio TV owners
Statewide Conservation Groups	Some outfitters
Some Agency Personnel	School kids
Moms	Some business leaders - pro-tourist

## **Tactics**

More allies	Letter Writing
Press outreach	Petition
release studies/ science	Talk Radio
Brochures	Polling
Videos	Slide Shows
Lobby	House Parties
Events with kids	

## **Role Playing - Case #1**

*Scene:* Jon Catton – Interview from Livingston Enterprise; Tom Skeele, Advocate

\*\*

After the role play, the group brainstormed what when well and what areas need to be improved. There was also some general comments made by both the participants and the consultants and they are listed in categories below.

### **Things we learned from role playing**

- If you don't know the answer to a media question, or not sure how to answer it, tell them you will call back in 5 minutes
- Acknowledge concern about fear
- Give positive response
- Provide as many facts, percentages, numbers and program details as you can.
- Keep a cheat sheet next to your desk
- Don't go with a question unless you are prepared
- Feel comfortable with silence
- Show empathy (yes, it is unfortunate and its one more tragic evidence that we are losing habitat)
- Watch jargon
- Look for common goals, interests, and cases (example conservationists and ranchers can and do work together and share common goals)
- Broaden story (We need to look at this case on two levels; first address the sheep issue, and then go the broader issues you want to get across)

## Case study #2

*Scene: Effect of wolves and other predators on big game and other hunting opportunities*

Jon Catton – Interview from Livingston Enterprise; Shawn Regnerus, Advocate

\*\*

### What we learned from role playing

Brought ADC in (swiped at huge federal expenditures versus cost of reintroductions)

Spun with habitat message

Argue that habitat is good for elk (hunters) AND wolves

Stay on message

Be firm but conciliatory, positive not bombastic

If you are hunter, let them know there are responsible hunters and gives the hunter's perspective

Provide perspective on "bad science" by talking about "barstool biologists"

Explain predators' self-regulating mechanism but explain in more detail.

Repeat good messages "Park is for all and money is from all??"

Try to make groups have common goals not one against the other.

Talk about who pays percentage of hunter pays??

Suggest better partnerships with ranchers and hunters -forge positive solutions

Develop personal anecdotes

Tell success stories of good partnerships

Provide statistics whenever possible

Broaden issue of who pays for what in wildlife management (and who benefits)

Create the villain (development) that both conservationists and hunters can unite against

Use science to explain how wolves can improve the elk population (taking old, weak, sick, and young)

### Hunters versus wildlife

Wrong way to look at it. Wolves are wildlife, and wildlife is part of hunters heritage.

Celinda made the point that we need a balanced policy. Let everyone be represented because wildlife belongs to everyone.

### Hunters versus environmentalists

- If you are a hunter, say so. I am a conservationist and a hunter, and they are not mutually exclusive.
- Be careful not to say, "whether you are a hunter *or* a conservationist". Point to the fact that hunters and environmentalists in many respects have the same concerns; we both care when the habitat for wildlife is being destroyed - we all lose
- Remind them when wolves strengthen elk herds, so it also increases hunters' opportunities.
- Make the point that *responsible* hunters are *good* conservationists.
- Half of the hunters in MT are self-describe as environmentalists.

### Wolf versus elk numbers

- Acknowledge wolves take elk. A WY study revealed that wolves are taking only the old and young, and 1 1/2 % die in winter. Doug Houston's study??
- Wolves can or do strengthen elk populations by taking the old and sick.
- Address the wolf/elk issue, and then go the habitat issue- PF
- If you look at 60 wolves on the north side and 15,000 Elk, we're not talking about too many wolves.
- Actual wolf depredation is either below or at what was expected in the reintroduction EIS.
- We need to address local and anecdotal knowledge, but counter anti-wolf hunters with other hunters who are pro-wolf, "I saw elk" stories.
- In Idaho, hunters complain that they are seeing less elk, but actually the increase in ATV use is scaring elk away from roads where irresponsible hunters hunt.
- We need to get sympathetic hunters to give examples of how they had a good elk hunting season. They don't need to be experts, just advocates.
- When responding to a question about numbers, ask how many people have seen a wolf and how many people see Elk. The public will quickly understand this.
- If the interviewer mentions a case of where he/she heard of elk numbers being down, a good reply could be "Well, I haven't heard of that case, all the information we have from the Fish and Wildlife Agencies are saying numbers are up.

### Cost of reintroduction

- The cost of reintroduction is small compared to the irresponsible costs of Wildlife Services (ADC).

### Messengers

- We need hunters to argue for wolves and elk.

### Who pays the price?

- When they say hunters pay the price you need to counter act that with how much the taxpayers are paying to protect public lands.

### When will we know when reducing wolf numbers is necessary?

- When the question comes up about the possibility of a wolf hunt (when will it be time?), we need to turn the conversation to the question of real, sustained recovery, and ongoing mortalities that stand in the way of recovery.
- Hunters haven't reached the quota for elk here in years, so the overall elk population numbers aren't in danger. Overall, elk are up about 10%.

### **John Lamson gave four important reminders**

- 1) If you are a hunter say so right away.
- 2) Identify hunters and organizations that support you.
- 3) Have messages that tie hunters and conservationists together (e.g. habitat protection).
- 4) Talk about balance. For example " Wolves and elk have been a part of a balanced healthy ecosystem throughout history of the Northern Rockies. Today, development, timber, construction, and industrial recreations threaten that balance. We have a responsibility to protect their habitat and ensure that the natural balance remains intact for generations to come.

## General comments

Peter reminded us to stick with top line messages, know what they are ahead of time, and keep coming back to these messages. Be pro-active and don't wait for the interviewer to take the lead.

Peter also mentioned to *not* put all hunters in the same camp. There are *good* hunters and *irresponsible* ones.

Many of the consultants suggested to keep reminding people that there is broad public support for wolves and to give polling results if you have them.

The positive statistics that we have on elk could be a “good news” press release.

Any time we make an economic argument about almost anything, we should take that opportunity to talk about ADC (as an example of wasteful financial policy). Place the rhetoric on irresponsible management.

Something we all have to remember, Celinda said, is that we all have an interest here; responsible hunters, taxpayers, and the majority of the public care about wildlife. Wildlife needs to be managed for all these interests – not just the small number of hunters who are anti-wolf.

## Writing overarching predator messages

Peter Fenn

When Peter's firm works with candidates or ballot measures, they ask the clients to write one paragraph that best explains who they are or what they are trying to convey to the public. Peter asked all the workshop participants to write one messages as if you were talking to 8th graders. Avoid messages that use jargon, and make it clear and concise.

Peter cautioned us not to go on the defensive as he and others had commented earlier that too often environmentalist are on the defensive. By defining your message with these paragraphs you go on the offensive.

Before we began to write, Peter addressed the problem we need to overcome with the meaning of the word "predator".

In a 1999 poll conducted by Peter's firm, the public did not distinguish between wolves, elk and wildlife. (see Peter's handout)

## Points to remember when crafting a message

- √ Be careful of words such as “spiritual” “ethical” “moral” that appear preachy.
- √ Avoid using negative language without a targeted villain.
- √ Craft the message for real people; make it appealing and inviting to them.
- √ Avoid the word predator.

## Alternatives to the word "predator"

The definition of predators, both in the dictionary and most people's minds is negative; associated with excesses in human nature. We have along way to go to turn the debate around. We can't redefine the word, but we can control how we use it. We should always use the word in context by mentioning the wolves, bears, and other predators by name– this will alleviate some of the negative connotations of the word. We can also tie “predators” to other value laden words so that the audience connects the meaning of those words to “predators”.

The word "carnivore" was suggested as an alternative to “predator.” Alistair said the work carnivore is what they are now using in Canada. Others were reluctant to use the word carnivore because few people know what carnivores are, while others associate it with any living thing that eats meat.

## Participants overarching message paragraphs

At this time, participants wrote single paragraph messages on the value of predators and shared them with the group. Peter then took us through a process to define key words and prioritize the most effective words and phrases.

*Grizzly bears, wolves and other majestic predators keep nature whole and in balance. They help make Montana great by ensuring you and your children still have wild, healthy landscapes to recreate in and sustain U.S. spiritually and economically. Join other concern residents in stopping multinational corporations from destroying remaining predator habitat and undermining our natural heritage.*

*We envision a common sense approach, involving western heritage, economies and science in finding balanced solutions for people, predators and the land they share now, and in the future.*

*You can't have a forest without trees. And you can't have healthy ecosystems without wolves, bears and other predators. At the Predator Conservation Alliance people like you are ..... working to restore our heritage and to shape a better future. Workers on behalf of the animals that keep all our wildlife healthy and in balance.*

*The American West without grizzly bears and wolves would be like England without cathedrals, empty of its heritage, a landscape missing much of its character. At the Predator Conservation Alliance people like you are working to restore our history and ensure our future, because predators not only have their place – they keep all our wildlife healthy and in balance.*

*Grizzly bears, wolves and other predators are part of the healthy landscape that defines us as (Americans, Westerners, Montanans). They are an important part of our wildlife heritage and we have a responsibility to ensure they are part of the legacy we leave for our children.*

*Our native wildlife and predators need us to save them a place/make them a place. Wolves, bears, mountain lions and others – these magnificent creatures are part of America’s rich history and can be a legacy we leave for our children. Predators are also an essential part of America’s rich landscapes – the mountain forests and broad plains we treasure, America’s last great wild places should be a home to our nations wildest inhabitants. As our neighbors, they will help enrich our heritage, our environment, our economy, our experience. So, as we plan for the future, we need to save wildlife predators a place.*

*Grizzly bears, lynx, wolverine and other carnivores once roamed all of North America, co-existing peacefully with people. Today, though these predators remain only in small isolated pockets, they are symbols of the freedom, beauty and unique natural heritage of our country. But they are losing their lives and homes to land development, logging, road-building and other activities that fragment and destroy their habitat. Luckily, Americans still have a chance to protect and restore these magnificent animals by using a few common-sense ideas: design land development carefully, keep roads out of critical habitat areas and learn how to live with and enjoy them.*

*People and grizzly bears, wolves, mountain lions and other predators have been around since the beginning of time. Predators are an integral part of the web of life. Biologists now agree that predators are key to maintaining and keeping nature in balance. This balance is tantamount to clean air and clean water. Predators enrich our lives and add to the quality of life. They are a symbol of our nation's rich natural heritage. We are the responsible stewards. When we protect these critical species we ensure them for future generations.*

*It is our moral and ethical responsibility to restore the balance between the needs of humans and the needs of nature. To bring this balance back. The key ingredients of healthy ecosystems – wolves, grizzly bears and other majestic wildlife – must be protected and restored. Restoring this balance will insure that our natural heritage is left intact for future generations.*

*Predators are essential to humans and our ecosystems. They maintain balance within natural systems and serve as indicators of a healthy natural environment. They provide us with a vital connection to wildness and are reminders of what we have lost.*

### **Top phases or words identified in the paragraph messages**

common sense approach  
economy and science  
majestic wildlife  
last wild place  
use wildlife, not always word predators  
legacy  
nature and balance



heritage  
web of life  
we can find balanced solutions that benefit people, predators, and the land  
join to stop corporate multi-national companies from undermining our heritage by destroying habitat  
losing predators (or name of species) is like England without Cathedrals!  
healthy landscape for them and for us  
our children's future is at stake  
future generations  
responsibility or responsible

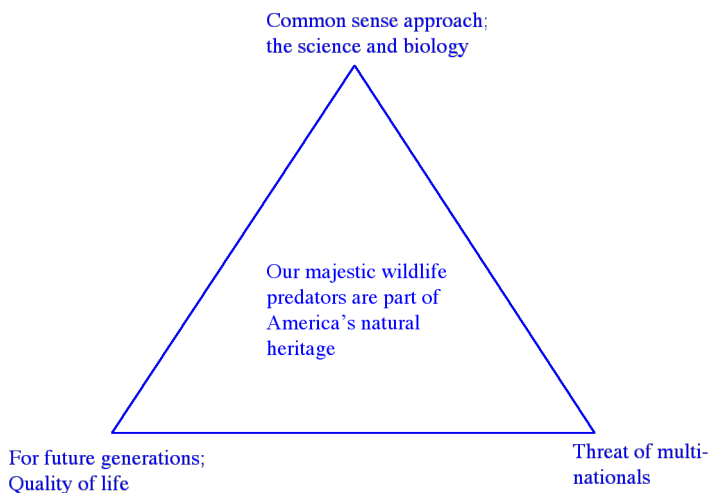
### **Other good messages**

biologists, not scientists	need to save a place for predators
quality of life	link history and heritage
symbol of the west	stewards/Stewardship
need like clean air and clean water	healthy landscape (wild and healthy)
defines us as Americans	for our children
use the species names as much as possible	restore and protect
harmony	restore balance
predators enrich our economy, environment, and our lives.	
people and grizzly have been around since beginning of time	
threats to their existence	
the real problem is outside and big corporate developers and big resorts	
we must intervene - time is running out	
wonder and enjoyment for children	
live in harmony if provided adequate habitat	
sensible solutions	
losing their homes	
symbol of our rich national heritage	
design common sense solutions	
peaceful coexistence	
freedom, beauty, heritage	

### **Don' Use**

anything asking them to modify their behavior  
spiritual (unless its the appropriate audience)  
moral and ethical

## THE MESSAGE TRIANGLE



When media consultants assist clients in developing a good message, they use the message triangle. Peter explained the triangle as follows: you place the overarching message in the center of the triangle and three critical parts on the outside points. All four parts should be clear, concise, and easy for the public to understand.

The parts and the overarching message should be messages the public can absorb. You can have 10 great points you want to convey to the public, but they usually can only hear and absorb three.

The overarching message in the center will be used to help you construct a paragraph. The center message is like your headline, but is not your entire story. It should be emotional in nature. It is usually the first thought that everyone hears and the most important message you want to convey. Essentially, the center message is like your summary goal and the edges of the triangle are the reasons. The message together can be used as a sound-bite.

### **Suggested center messages** (these will change depending on audience)

Our grizzly wolves and mountain lions (or, our majestic wildlife) are part of America's Natural Heritage and enhance the quality of all our lives.

Our majestic wildlife is part of our American wildlife heritage and needs wild places to call home

Our children and grandchildren have a right to know that grizzly bear, wolves and other predators are alive and well in America.

Responsibility to protect and restore grizzly, wolves and other wild predators so that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy them.

## **Possible triangle parts**

common sense approach to science

threatened by multi-nationals (be as specific as you can when talking about threats- J.L)

quality of life

future for our children

our children and our children's children, have a right to know that grizzly bears, mountain lions, and wolves are alive and well in the Northern Rockies.

## **Putting it all together**

Our majestic wildlife predators our part of our natural heritage and enhance the quality of our lives.

### General comments

- Celinda reminded us not to seem desperate.
- Jennifer said that messages should convey the opportunity for people to be responsible stewards and feel good about it. You want messages that inspire people to *want* to be responsible, not *have* to tone. Your words should be inspiring to give them an opportunity to feel like they are in favor of something.
- In various campaigns, Peter has developed a plastic card people can carry in their pocket that has the paragraph on the front, and the parts of the message triangle on the back.
- Peter provided some hunting poll results from his work with the Humane Society of the United States.

“Trophy Hunting” is very unpopular with the general public – whenever a hunt can be characterized as a trophy hunt, it should for example, mountain lions.

“Recreational hunting” is not as offensive to the general public.

Protecting wild animals through education is very important to 60+% of the public.

## Messages for different constituencies

Dr. Alistair Bath

Alistair divided the participants into groups to craft specific messages for the following audiences. Moms, hunters/anglers, tourism industry, elected officials, and ranchers. The paragraphs are listed below.

### Mothers

It will be a sad day if grizzly bears and wolves only appear on the pages of our children's textbooks. Our kids and grandkids deserve a future as rich and vibrant as the world we inherited. As moms, we have a special responsibility to preserve and protect wildlife (or name of species).

These animals are great protective moms... their lives center around nurturing and protecting their young. In a rising tide of development and a changing world, these grizzly bear moms and wolf moms are fighting for the future of their cubs. WE SHOULD TOO!

### Hunters and anglers

American hunters and anglers support the restoration and protection of wolves, bears and other predators. Sharing the land (backcountry, or the wild country) with these "majestic" animals enhances the wild experience of western hunting and fishing traditions.

Our best hunting and fishing opportunities are found where bears, wolves and other predators live. We need to work together to protect these wild places from - irresponsible development, logging, mining and unrestricted motorized use - for our families.

### Tourism industry

Investing in our human community by investing in our wildlife community.

Maintaining healthy ecosystems sustains healthy communities.

Our future economy depends on healthy wildlands and abundant wildlife.

Wildlife and wildlands - Its our economy stupid!

(Use National Survey Data on importance of wildlife to Americans)

Comments: Make sure to add tourism figures here. For instance, a study by the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce, the "National Survey of fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-associated Recreation," suggests that watching has become more than a fringe industry. In 1996, according to the report, 77 million adults, participated in some form of wildlife-related recreation. For those who *watch* wildlife, 63 million people, generated \$29 billion dollars.

## Elected officials

It is government's responsibility to protect the quality of life from big developers and multi-national corporations that are damaging wildlife habitat.

Montanans (or what ever state you are in) overwhelming support protecting our unique wildlife because they bring millions of dollars to our state's economy.

(show polling data and numbers and economic trends data, such as tourism is the fastest growing sector....)

## Ranchers

Protecting important wildlife predators helps ranchers maintain our traditional western lifestyle by stopping subdivisions, sprawl and ensuring a continuing tie to the land.

### **How other campaigns deliver messages and what we can learn from them**

John Lamson presented overheads of other groups' communications, highlighting what works (humor, emotion, drama, contrast) and what doesn't (confusion!).

Essentially, you can learn a lot from others on how to do it and how not to. Press releases should be newsworthy and emotional in the title. The facts can follow.

Peter showed various ads he made relating to the problems associated with asbestos, trapping and hunting. The asbestos ads were very effective because they used real people with real problems. They got to the real heart of the matter, Peter said. He also mentioned that having someone first hand share their personal stories is much more effective than a third party telling you the associated problems.

After showing the "NO on 197" ad with the mountain lion being shot, Peter remarked that you don't want to show gory visuals more than a few times or you will have a backlash. In one campaign, Peter ran some fairly mild ads, but the opposition ran a telephone campaign to the television stations asking for them to be removed. Some people threatened that if the stations did not pull the ads, they would force the sporting good stores to boycott their stations. The television stations concerned about the loss of advertising, dropped the ads.

If you have dramatic visuals for television, buy in an adult market with no children's shows. You want to be careful not to cross the line because if you are too negative they will pull your ad.

It's all boils down to money, Peter said. Despite the problems, he encouraged us not to shy away from the use of visual images. Images help break through to the general public who pays little attention to the issues and/or politics. By providing visual images you can simplify complex issues and have your message come across in a memorable way. It is also a good way to build your audience and support.

The benefits of producing and showing a video can go along way. If you have a video for television you can use what Peter calls the "smoke and mirrors" effect. Essentially, you make an ad, similar to the No On 197, and then use it to get free press and attention. For example, NO on 197 campaign showed the video at press conferences, house parties, volunteer signature parties, and also mailed it to donors and others.

A video Peter estimates can cost between \$8,000-10,000 and \$30,000-40,000 to produce video, depending on how much original footage one needs.

### **Delivery mechanisms for messages**

John Lamson

John gave the following comments on how to improve outreach to the press:

***Define your issue:*** Radio is entertainment as well as information. Unfortunately, we have surrendered the airwaves to conservatives, like Rush Limbaugh. We simply don't offer enough alternatives to conservative talk radio. One third of Rush Limbaugh's audience is progressive.

***Generate a news story*** - twice per month that you market in the radio community.

***Provide radio feeds,*** for example to Rocky Mountain News Service; Boise and Bozeman

***Coordinate volunteers*** to call into radio shows and write letters to the editor of local and major newspapers. Have 3 to 5 people that are well versed in the issues to call in or write on the same issue, weekly and monthly. This method can help you get your message out. For example, KBMC 1/2 hr. Thursday and Friday nights (out of Billings) is a public radio talk show and a great opportunity to get on air.

***Reach out to news staff*** not only when you have actual "news." You need "good news" pieces and this will help you start up a personal relationship with reporters. You want them to perceive you as fact driven as well as advocates for your cause. You can be a source of background information for them, off the record, when an issue is not "on record" or newsworthy at the moment. Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance sends information to the press weekly about meetings, lectures, etc. pertinent to their issues to remind reporters to show up.

***Develop a media packet.*** Peter suggested providing reporters with a folder with tabs so they can easily insert your materials and file them. Include black and white photos (with the photographers name stamped on the back). Provide the photos on disk or on your website where they can download them. The media is more likely to keep your materials if they have a smart folder for it. Some may never keep your materials. It's up to you to develop the relationships.

***Create a B-roll .*** The roll is great to use as a “video news release” and enables you to create the story for reporters with footage they can use over time. Most stations don't have good animal footage and they will appreciate anything you can send them. Make it short, approximately 2 minutes.

#### Other mechanisms to gain attention on your issue

***Provide good visuals on the web*** Use photos rather than line art as PCA has done on their logo. With line art, the viewer is locked into one artist's representation of the animals. Rather than use cartoonish, over-sized or unrealistic drawings of animals, let the viewer see visuals that let them gain their own perceptions of and connections to these animals. Line art really undersells the beauty and majesty of these animals.

Always have something for the kids on your website and make it easy to find.

The animals need to be front and center on PCA 's website; right now, the issues are the highlight, and it's not enough to draw people in.

Provide a screensaver that is free and downloadable from the Website. Send the saver to donors, the press, and others you want to attract to your issue.

***Go on the oppositions' websites*** Make use of the oppositions' chat rooms. Ask questions, create debate about the issues, find out what the other side is saying. The financial firms spend thousands of dollars monitoring what the public is saying about them. Go to the financial websites and talk about the destruction they are creating. This may not be the most effective way to get your message out, but it's fun.

***Invite children and adult participation*** Have a program where kids name the wolves rather than their current numbering system. Write a proposal to the National Environmental Education Association to have this as a kids' program.

Work with the Cub Scouts. Assist the kids with their wolf, bear, and bobcat badges. These are true marks of passage; they represent courage, progress, achievement, and success.

## Applying predator issues to other campaigns

Open discussion with consultants and participants

Tom raised the question "Can the information we learn at this workshop benefit wilderness, biodiversity, animal, or other conservation and animal groups working both directly or indirectly on predator protection?" The emotional, scientific, and economic value of protecting predators and their ecosystems could go a long way to assisting other groups. The question, however, is whether applying predator messages to other campaigns is a liability or an asset? A brief discussion followed.

Tom gave one example of how overarching messages could help the animal and humane groups and individuals who call or write PCA. By providing broad scale messages to these groups, we can provide incentive for them to incorporate habitat protection into their own messages.

Tom was concerned that other groups may be too overloaded already to add predators to their plate. Predators may do more political harm than good on other issues.

Some of the participants gave examples of how predator messages have already benefited or are currently being incorporated into campaigns. GYC is using grizzly bears to highlight the importance of Taylor Fork outside of Yellowstone. They emphasized the grizzly bear and several cubs to talk about the important reproductive cycle that will be preserved by the complex land deal. Jon Catton said that it was tremendously useful to be able to put a symbol on a complicated land deal.

Louisa mentioned that the Sierra Club is already tying grizzlies to four national campaigns: roadless, Lewis and Clark, ORV's, and sprawl. In the region, Sierra Club worked hard to get WWF on board not to support delisting Yellowstone grizzlies without first having habitat protections in place. Louisa found it extremely helpful to play several national angles at the same time.

The Sierra Club is also working with the Wilderness Society on integrating the predator issue into national issues. Also, for this to work, Betsy believed we need to build the personal relationships between groups so that they will be more apt to utilize our information. Someone suggested that we share our message with allies, like hunters, ranchers, etc. to enable us to know how we're going to present issues and go forward on them.

The consultants recommended we be more proactive in asking national groups to carry predator messages. They encouraged us to keep our message national, as well as state and locally focused and to use the actual names of species, rather than the word predator.

One participant asked if we can apply predator messages to the grasslands issue? Celinda said some of it yes, but that most of the public would not know how to relate prairie dogs to predators. Different messages will need to be developed. "Majestic" wildlife may not apply to ferrets etc, but we should find compelling ways to talk about those species and their habitats.



John suggested that a one-page message statement from this workshop could be developed and sent with a cover letter to the entire conservation community. The letter could discuss the consultants and groups who participated and the lessons learned. John believed there are places where predator messages *can and should* be incorporated into other campaigns.

Peter Fenn gave some polling data on how the public views various organizations. Polling results show the following:

- HSUS favored by 83% of the public
- PETA opposed by 12% of the public (thought more would oppose)
- Greenpeace opposed by 12% of the public

## **Where do we go from here? What are the information gaps?**

What information is needed to achieve our goals?

With Alistair's assistance, group brainstormed on above questions; their comments are grouped:

### Species Research

- What species need in terms of habitat. We need comparison summaries of these needs for the grizzly, cougars, lynx, and elk.

### Inspiration and action oriented messages

- Need messages that can inspire and get the public to act on behalf of predators.
- We need additional skills training on how to deliver messages effectively and to ask for funds and/or action.

### Materials

- Need a one source economic package on tourism, ranching, and wildlife viewing to deal with economic issues/arguments ( i.e. how wildlife can help the local economy).
- A small cheat card of valuable information that we all have on hand all the time
- Develop an activist package with talking points and media contacts
- Consolidate list of bad guys and what they've done – crimes/corporations – integrate the bad people into message and across species!

## Media Materials

- Develop a press package with new messages, photos, contact lists, quotes from credible people
- Video that can be used for variety of purposes - B roll, documentaries, fundraisers, donors
- Need fact sheets that include facts, figures, and personal stories on why predators are important spiritually, economically and ecologically.

## Strategic Media Plan

- Need leverage on related issues, like roadless and roads policy, ATVs
- Revisit/redesign headlines of press releases.
- Develop communication plan
- Need to develop grasslands message strategy and have it be linked to overall predator strategy
- Identify mechanisms to elevate and prioritize how we get predators into the national scene?
- Develop a 10-step action program to involve the public.

## Research

- Research opposition: what they have done, and the costs of those activities to society and the environment. Some of the "bad guys" include U.S Forest Service, BLM, multi-nationals. Some of this research has been done and needs to be consolidated and used.
  - √ Identify the opposition by obtaining opposing comments to various proposed regulations and policies and find out what they are saying and why.
  - √ Get on the opposition's mailing lists
- Research and find our diverse messengers and revisit potential allies.
- Identify the "Oh Shit" issues to you need to develop arguments for. You need to test for three things: (one example might be the public's perception that elk numbers are down).
  1. What is it that the public firmly believes?
  2. What is it that is true?
  3. And how are the two having negative consequences on your issue?

### Developing and crafting messages

- Make existing communications and presentations consistent with new message
- Develop immediately a shorthand, draft version of what we've learned for immediate use.
- Develop messages for the grassland issue.

### Polling, focus groups, testing

- Polling summary
- Need training for NGO's in techniques for informal polling and focus groups that can take place with existing staff and little resources.
- Need to test for the use of wild, wild predators, wild animals, and population numbers of elk etc.
- Test our message with potential ally groups and targets
- Invite other groups to road test our messages with them – get into their culture and what they are thinking
- Bring diverse groups together and after listening to opposition, mirror what you heard back to them, so they know that you've been listening

### Other

- Develop a calendar of opportunities to get our message out (events, forums, etc.)
- Hold Hats-Off Awards and provide recognition opportunities for media, agencies, scientists, and activists.
- Need to expand scientific allies on other species than bears, especially in Canada.

## **Information on trends**

Green Media Toolshed: (“Greenwire” – environmental data on the Web) provide information on polling results

Roper Center (CT) stores all poll data and can get us stuff that’s public, searching by subject

Green Wire, Washington D.C provides environmental data.

The Wildlife Network - Sharon pulled together polling data on environmental issues for the workshop

Department of Commerce and tourism bureaus often do aggressive polling on interests, landscape values

Department at state levels

US Fish and Wildlife Website

Environmental groups

National Environmental Education and Training Center – Roper-Starch Survey (annual?)

USFWS Website data/information

With polling data, you can get your pollster to analyze and synthesize something that can be used and put out far and wide, but there might be details and statistics you want to keep close to the vest. Poll questions that are about message aren’t usually released, because to the media or opposition, they will look biased or “leading.”

HSUS poll

## **How to Evaluate Messages**

Measuring effectiveness over time (Alistair’s model): T1, T2, T3 Evaluation  
(get full model/explanation from Alistair)

Re-assess groups over time (before/after)

Conduct baseline research (to give reference point)

Other indicators:

belief vs. truth/fact

What is important vs. What do people believe?

What is important and what is working for and against us?

## **Indicators of message effectiveness**

- 1) Questions raised in public forums
- 2) Focus group findings
- 3) Number of media articles which reflect our position
- 4) How many people/groups are incorporating our message?
- 5) Changes in policy, on the ground actions taken
- 6) Number of TV spots reflecting our message – we need to watch TV more; the general public does NOT get its news from print media – 78% of public affairs information comes through television!
- 7) Changes in behavior - example USFWS number of mortalities by agencies??

## Other

Always ask people what they've heard about your group and how they heard about it.

Place a message on Yellowstone National Park radio, which runs continuously on the airwaves for Park visitors

Be the source of information/message for agencies - take information into government agencies and monitor how your language is actually used by these agencies.

## **Evaluation**

### What did you like about the workshop?

Good working group

Opportunity for advocates, biologists and ecologists to get together and learn, think and brainstorm.

Opportunity to create multi-carnivore message for species and habitat protection

Having several different groups represented and to learn from each other.

Gained new perspective on communicating; Develop a top-line message

### THE CONSULTANTS

How to improve press releases

Chance to think creatively and strategically about these issues.

Alistair's brainstorm exercise

### Ways to improve the workshop

- Critical to follow through
- More handouts
- Develop team message
- A break to go outside
- Better coffee
- More ways to communicate to other groups
- Certainty of follow-up