

Group Training Workshop - Notes
New Brunswick Public Library
Saturday 11/14/09

Attendees:	
Greg Auriemma, Ocean	Steve Lanset, Hudson-Meadowlands
Joyce Isaza, Ocean	Laura Bagwell, Jersey Shore
Kevin Geoffroy, Raritan Valley	Mark Marciniak, South Highlands
Ken Johanson, Chapter Chair	Jim Brightwell, South Highlands
Paul Sanderson, Loantaka	Mike Lindemann, Raritan Valley
Eric Hausker, Loantaka	Don McBride, Raritan Valley
Lynne Weiss, Central	Jeff Tittel, Chapter Director
Terry Stimpfel, Central	Marilyn Finley, Northwest
Lois Blake, Jersey Shore	Jodi Jamieson, Hudson-Meadowlands
Faith Teitelbaum, Jersey Shore	Grace Sica, Chapter Staff
Leia Sims, Jersey Shore	Janet Glass, Hudson-Meadowlands
Bob Grize, Jersey Shore	Jane Tousman, Raritan Valley

Notes from Presentation:

- **The key way to grow your group is by building a community of engaged individuals. If people enjoy participating they will continue to participate.**
- **Keep a “black book” which should include the following:**
 - o Group ExCom Members contact information
 - o Other local environmental organizations
 - o Media Contacts
 - o Legislators and the names of their environmental aides
 - o Mailing List of ACTIVE members
 - o Frequently called Sierra Club Staff (State and National Offices)
 - o List of group’s special events along with contact information
 - o Business Donors for events and individual donors for fundraising activities
 - o Local Election results (*Close elections are an invitation for Sierra Club involvement next time around.)
- **Alternate meetings with outings and fundraising events to keep people interested.** Monthly general meetings with presentations are difficult to maintain. It is important to vary your activities.
 - o Ocean does 5 general meetings a year, 2 fundraisers, and 5 outings/events
 - o Create a Monthly Action Plan (MAP). Use it to repeat events annual; repeating and incrementally improving events is the key to success.

- General Meetings and ExCom meetings should be very different.
 - General meetings: entertain, excite, educate, and engage
 - Limit policy discussions.
 - Offer **door prizes** –Central uses the following method to get a ticket for a door prize, you must wear a name tag.
 - Groups meet in the following locations:
 - Churches (Unitarian Society and Quakers)
 - Whole Foods
 - Libraries
 - County administration building
 - **Most groups do not pay for space. The most a group paid was \$50 per meeting.**
 - Presentations ideas – Tie your presentations to salient and current issues:
 - Animals – bats are a current topic
 - Exotic and endangered places
 - Local naturalists
 - Films (Addicted to Plastic)
 - Townhall with other organizations on a prevalent issue
 - ****Policy presentations do not draw a crowd.**
 - Refreshments or dinner are key! Many groups said they put out a donation jar to cover the cost of food at a meeting.
 - Outings should be tied into an issue. For example conserving a particular type of land, or a cleanup used to highlight a recycling initiative.
 - ExCom meetings
 - Should be used for determining policy and conservation positions
 - Developing a monthly action plan
 - ExCom meetings are often held at a members house. The Jersey Shore Group ExCom meets directly prior to the general meeting at a restaurant.
- Cultivating an active membership
 - **Tabling events** are critical. Each event should have three things:
 - Include an Icebreaker petition – (An easy to explain “Apple pie, Chevrolet” petition.).
 - A second sign in sheet for getting onto the mailing list.
 - A handout of upcoming events to give to interested folks.
 - Ocean writes a **press release for every event**. And lists it in the community section of papers. It is important that the public know you are active.
 - **Sending postcards to new members** – Get in touch with the labels desk to get labels for new members. When you receive reports of new members send them a letter inviting them to the next two events and a post card asking them how they want to be involved. If they send it back add them to your active members list.

- At **public hearings or council meetings** collect the names and contact information for people who are on our side. Add them to your active members list.
- **LTE project** – Read the newspapers. When people write in and have positions similar to the Sierra Club, contact them (use voter registration roles to get their address). Send them a Sierra Club membership brochure and explain how the club can help them address their concerns.
- Fundraising
 - **Ocean** breaks their fundraising into four tiers:
 - High End Donors
 - Public – **Concessions** at public events (N.B. This requires your group to meet health standards. Do not do this without first checking with your local health and fire department.)
 - Membership Event – Ocean runs a **picnic** in the summer. Tickets are sold for \$20, food is donated by members and purchased by group.
 - Business Community – Ocean hosts a **holiday party and silent auction** in December. Businesses donate products, members are able to get good deals, no entrance fee is charged.
 - Other groups have the following events:
 - Loantaka also runs a **silent auction** completely via email.
 - In the past Central has done **wine and cheese fundraisers** when trying to raise money for a particular issue.
 - Jersey Shore runs a **coffeehouse**, local artists perform baked goods are donated, and an entrance fee is collected.
- Conservation Issues
 - For help with conservation issues contact chapter director (Jeff Tittel) or Conservation Chair (Laura Lynch).
 - Laura Lynch will be releasing “A Beginner’s Guide to Land Use,” in the next few months. This should be a useful primer for land conservation.