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Changing Public Behavior: Increase citizen participation using target audience information

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Abstract Text:

Implementing outreach techniques that lead to measurable impacts is not a simple or straight-forward process. A survey of Extension national water program state coordinators identified a lack of information about behavior and/or management practice adoption rates at the start of a project as a barrier to evaluation. The Changing Public Behavior Project responds to this challenge by assisting water scientists, natural resource professionals, and educators to develop and use audience information to focus outreach initiatives. New resources help educators improve citizen understanding and involvement in community decision-making for water resources. Through training, peer support, and practice, water resource professionals can learn: what questions to ask; what tools to use to gather social science information; how to use the tools and how to analyze results; and how to use results to select outreach techniques that satisfy audience needs. This poster showcases project tools in development: a searchable database for target audience information; a decision-tree for choosing which social science tools will work best for a particular situation; Web-based training opportunities; and a self-evaluation rubric for measuring skill development.

Impact Statement:

Applying education tools and techniques found on the Water Outreach Education Web site can help natural resource professionals and agencies identify measurable impacts for outreach initiatives.