

Dear Seagrass Outreach Partner:

Working with local radio stations is a great way to announce Seagrass Awareness Month in your county and to disseminate the message about protecting seagrasses from boater impacts. Radio can reach folks in this busy world of commuters.

Radio stations are obligated to air public service announcements on a regular basis. For this reason, they are usually willing to cooperate with you in producing public service announcements regarding seagrass protection. After obtaining a phone number for the local station or broadcasting company, simply call to find out what procedure you should follow to submit public service announcements.

Several examples of PSAs that have aired on local stations in the Florida Keys are included on this CD. If you chose to use one of these announcements, you will want to substitute your own statistics and county name in the appropriate locations and edit as needed to meet your county's circumstances. Information tables containing statistics pertaining to each coastal county in Florida from Florida Marine Research Institute's Technical Report entitled: **Scarring of Florida's Seagrasses: Assessment and Management Options**. Copies of the FMRI Technical Report TR-1 can be requested from FMRI, Attn.: Librarian, 100 Eighth Avenue SE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5095 or by calling the librarian at 727-896-8626.

Often you will be asked to provide public service announcements for your topic in writing and the station will produce them using their own voice person and studio. Occasionally, the radio producers may want to write the PSA and will simply request the information from you. You may want to give them the fact sheets that you developed for your county and ask to review the text before they go into final production, just to ensure accuracy.

Another method of production involves getting middle school or high school students to write and produce their own announcements using the school's media center equipment. This was done in the Florida Keys under the supervision of a teacher and a Seagrass partner who then provided the cassette tapes to a local station for broadcasting. From the broadcasting standpoint, it worked well to have a few announcements produced by students mixed with the more traditional PSAs. If a media center is not available at the school, the local radio station might be willing to have a few students accompanied by adults make the PSA at the station's studio provided prior arrangements are made.

Another use of radio media is advertising your event or proclamation by submitting it to be aired on the "community calendar" of events, a regular feature of most radio stations. Submissions can usually be made by sending a fax with the pertinent information to the station's contact person.

Enlisting experts such as fishing guides, seagrass scientists, law enforcement officers, resource managers, or others to appear on radio programs or talk shows is another successful way to utilize radio. It is often possible to target the audience of a specific show with the appropriate expert that the audience will have respect for. Enlisting a fishing guide to appear as a guest on a fishing talk show will be quite successful. Another option is to pair experts up to maximize the opportunity of airtime.

A few more tips:

- _ When writing your own PSA or modifying an existing one, you will want to practice reading it aloud to make sure that it reads smoothly.
- _ Keep the language simple and direct to avoid any confusion.

- Before writing your announcements, you will need to check with the station to find out if they would like 60-second announcements or 30-second ones or a combination of both (usually best). You will need to read the announcements aloud and note the time so that you can add or drop text as needed.
- Although the turnaround time for production at the station is usually not that long, it is important to give the radio station time to produce the announcements before the date you wish to have them aired.

Good luck!