



Fundraising for Volunteer Monitoring

University of Rhode Island

University of Wisconsin

Elizabeth Herron, Kris Stepenuck, and Linda Green

Volunteer monitoring: Cost Effective – Not Cost Free

Some people might think that volunteer monitoring is a way to collect monitoring data for free – after all, the people collecting the information are “volunteers” and not being paid for their work. But there are costs involved which make volunteer monitoring *cost-effective*, not *cost-free*. Equipment, analyses and staff – even volunteer staff - all have costs associated with them. By its very nature, monitoring is a long-term effort, and while start-up funding is often easier to find, continued funding is essential for program success. Thus securing sustainable financial support is a key component of overall volunteer monitoring program management efforts. This fact sheet provides suggestions as well as links to resources for developing a long-term financial plan for supporting your volunteer monitoring program. It borrows and builds from information found in the fall 1993 issue of *The Volunteer Monitor* (Volume 5, number 2), the national newsletter of volunteer water quality monitoring, Special Topic: Staying Afloat Financially (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/newsletter/volmon05no2.pdf>).

Volunteer monitoring programs are organized and supported in many different ways. Programs may be entirely independent or may be associated with state, interstate, local, or federal agencies; with environmental organizations; or with schools or universities. Financial support may come from government grants, partnerships with businesses, endowments, independent fundraising efforts, corporate donations, membership dues, or a combination of these sources. While there are many approaches for obtaining financial support, there are a few general guidelines for financial success that apply to all programs. These include:

Diversification. This is the key to financial security.

The more different funding sources you tap into, the better able your program will be to survive changes in priorities or budget crunches.

Data users. Whoever is using the monitoring data – whether it’s a government agency, a university or the community – should be helping to pay for collecting that information.

In-kind support. Donations such as technical expertise, equipment, or laboratory analyses, can be as important as direct financial assistance.



Run of the Charles Canoe and Kayak Race fundraiser

This is the eleventh in a series of factsheet modules which comprise the **Guide for Growing CSREES Volunteer Monitoring Programs**, part of the *National Facilitation of Cooperative State Research Education Extension Service (CSREES) Volunteer Monitoring Efforts* project. Funded through the USDA CSREES, the purpose of this project is to build a comprehensive support system for Extension volunteer water quality monitoring efforts nationally. The goal is to expand and strengthen the capacity of existing Extension volunteer monitoring programs and support development of new groups. Please see <http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/> for more information.

Determining how much money you need in order to operate your program is the first step in developing a good fundraising plan. Costs for monitoring programs vary widely – from start-up expenses involved in purchasing equipment to costs associated with daily activities. Typical expenses faced by volunteer monitoring programs include:

- Field and lab equipment and supplies (don't forget consumables such as filters, reagents, media etc., and quality control/quality assessment expenses)
- Laboratory space and/or analytical services (consider “hidden” costs of running your own laboratory such as hazardous waste disposal, certification requirements and staff when deciding between in-house and contract analyses)
- Office space, supplies and services (if you are renting space remember utilities and other costs)
- Staff (incredibly hard-working, and usually underpaid)
- Communications and mailings
 - Phones
 - Postage
 - Internet access
 - Web design and hosting
- Publications
 - Monitoring manuals
 - Monitoring reports
 - Newsletters
 - Recruitment brochures
 - Factsheets
- Conferences / workshops (attending or organizing for your volunteers)
 - Registration fees
 - Travel expenses
 - Meeting space fees
 - Refreshments
 - Audio visual, handouts, etc.
- Transportation (for personnel and/or samples)
- Insurance (for equipment, liability, etc.)
- Special events / volunteer recognition



Contacting other monitoring programs or service providers in your area to determine typical costs for services can be invaluable for honing your budget. In addition you may be able to identify opportunities for sharing resources or perhaps discover surplus supplies, equipment or other resources you can utilize in your program. To ensure that you are making the most of limited funds, evaluate your sampling strategies to be sure you have selected the most effective monitoring components and variables, and that you have optimized your overall monitoring effort (for more ideas see factsheet IV of this series - Designing Your Monitoring Strategy: Basic Questions and Resources to Help Guide you <http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/Outreach/DesigningYourStrategyIV.pdf> or the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's *Volunteer Surface Water Monitoring Guide* - <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/monitoring-guide.html>).

Grassroots Fundraising

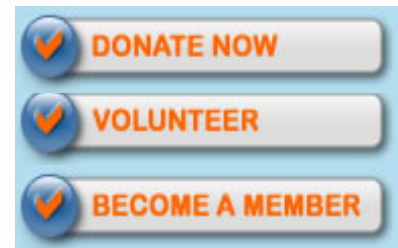
The term “grassroots” typically refers to building support for an organization from a broad base of individuals. Thus events such as spaghetti dinners, yard sales, selling t-shirts or other means of getting many small donations often characterize grassroots fundraising efforts. While that may sound like a lot of work, grassroots fundraising provides some tremendous benefits that receiving grants simply can't.

Fundraising from a broad base of individuals is particularly valuable for environmental monitoring because it necessitates *interacting* with members of the community. It means talking to folks about the work you're doing, building relationships, staying in touch, and making people feel involved enough to want to be supporters or members of your organization. And communicating well makes you more accountable to your base – typically the residents of your watershed - instead of a foundation or state agency (adapted from <http://www.enoughenough.org/blog/32/grassroots-fundraising-for-the-revolution/>). Grassroots fundraising helps get the word out about your efforts, and can build a sense of ownership within the community. It also provides an opportunity to involve your volunteers in helping with fundraising activities. This may allow volunteers who may not be able to or who do not have an interest in actual monitoring, an opportunity to actively participate in the program.

Grassroots fundraising can also help provide money for your program that is not restricted, or earmarked for specific uses. Government or foundation grants are often linked to very specific activities or products, and cannot be used for basic operating support. For example, USEPA funds can't be used to pay for food or beverages. But providing coffee, snacks and other refreshments often helps get people to come to events, particularly early in the morning! Foundations are often interested in building capacity or supporting new projects, but not supporting basic operations of organizations. Thus having a source of unrestricted funding can be really important to cover basic operating expenses such as rent or utilities, or to respond to unexpected situations.

Here are a few examples of grassroots fundraising activities:

- Membership dues
- Direct appeals for donations
- Online donations (via direct emails and/or website appeals)
- Community events or meetings
- Raffles and auctions
- Challenge grants
- “Friends of” organizations
- Boat or kayak races or tours
- Car washes, yard sales, and other special events
- Branded product sales (e.g. t-shirts and hats with your program's logo)



Rivers Coalition Defense Fund Raffle Winner

Hosting events such as house parties, BBQs, pasta suppers, etc. where the community is invited to come socialize and hear a presentation about a particular aspect of your program can be particularly useful. Tickets can be sold to cover expenses and to raise additional funds, or you can simply invite people and ask for donations during the course of the event. Attendees of these types of meetings often become long-term donors. Relationships are also built and strengthened through these events, providing unique opportunities for networking and gathering feedback, as well as generating future donations.

Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (<http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/>) has online resources as well as training and consulting programs. In particular the Grassroots Fundraising Journal (<http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/index.html>) provides practical tips and tools to help you raise money for your organization.

Fundraising Yes! (<http://www.fundraisingyes.com/>) Claims to have everything you ever wanted to know about fundraising, including links to resources and a variety of fundraising options.

Nonprofit Prophet - Tips, Trends and Tools for Fundraisers (<http://thelibrary.org/infolink/nonprofit/>) includes a fundraising glossary as well as links to nonprofit resources and grant information.

About.com: Nonprofit charitable organizations (<http://nonprofit.about.com/>) links to a range of issues relevant to volunteer monitor program support.

Tony Poderis - Your Non-profit Fund-Raising Resource (<http://www.raise-funds.com/>) contains links to articles, exhibits and documents compiled by a development professional.

FundRaisers.com (<http://www.fundraisers.com/index.php>): *Your Guide to the World of Fundraising*, includes links to products, ideas, resources and even blogs for fundraising.

Step by Step Fundraising (<http://stepbystepfundraising.com/>) Practical resources to help you raise funds for non profit causes.

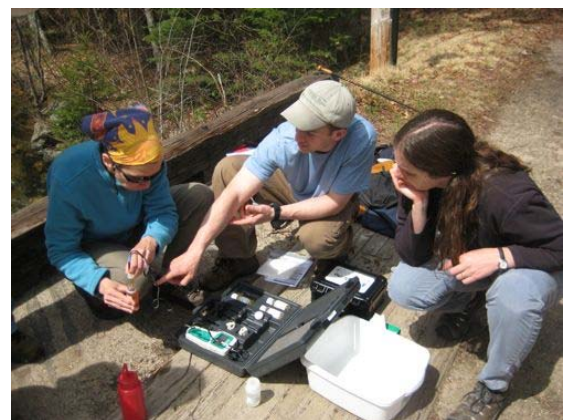
2008 Online Fundraising Survival Guide: 12 Winning Strategies to Survive & Thrive in a Down Economy (<http://www.fundraising123.org/article/online-fundraising-handbook>) Recently updated by Network for Good, this guide focuses on raising funds online, making your web site more effective, mining for new donors and much more.

A Fresh Approach to a House Party Pays Off (<http://www.usawaterquality.org/volunteer/pdf/GuideBook/FundingGBModuleHousePartybyStuderking.pdf>) Case study of what worked - and didn't work - with house party fundraisers.

Fundraising for Watershed Groups (<http://www.theoec.org/PDFs/fact%20sheets/fundraising%20for%20watershed%20groups%20121906.pdf>) concise Ohio Environmental Council Fact Sheet

Consider Charging for Services

We tend to place greater value on things with a cost; after all we've been told that if it's free – it mustn't be worth much, right? So charging for the use of volunteer monitoring data or even for participation in the monitoring program can strengthen some people's view of your efforts. Plus, charging even a nominal fee can provide much needed program stability. Stable programs more easily attract additional funds, which improves program sustainability. In addition, the fees charged for monitoring services or data can often be used as matching funds for grants.



There are a number of successful strategies for charging for services to consider. The URI Watershed Watch (URIWW) program has a per site annual registration fee (<http://www.uri.edu/ce/wq/ww/Monitoring.htm>). The registration fee is not paid by the volunteers monitoring those sites, but rather by a local sponsor, typically a municipal government, lake or watershed association, or sporting group (e.g., Trout Unlimited). The local sponsor is typically a primary user of the monitoring data, and is often involved in the initial selection of monitoring sites and parameters. The registration fee helps to cover a portion of the analytical and equipment costs, as well as to fund student staff. The URIWW analytical laboratory also operates as a contract laboratory for state and federal projects that require water quality results from a certified laboratory, such as licensed beach monitoring, and charges a per analyte, per sample fee.

Charging for Services (continued)

The New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring Program (NH LLMP) operates in a similar manner (<http://www.cfb.unh.edu/programs/LLMP/nhllmp.htm>). However, instead of charging a set fee per site, they charge per analyte – a sort of à la carte method – which allows for varying levels of participation. As with URIWW, reports provided by the NH LLMP put the data into context (as opposed to simply reporting the values, as is the product from some analytical labs). The Center for Watershed Science and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/level3/CWSE.html>) charges for their services and also provides a summary report when working with local groups on grant-funded volunteer monitoring projects. They are also supported through laboratory service contracts. The Massachusetts Water Watch Partnership (MWWP) promotes itself as a service provider, helping to support volunteer monitoring programs (<http://www.umass.edu/tei/mwwp/>). They charge for monitoring equipment and analyses, but also help organizations to interpret their data and provide resources for overall program support.

Streamkeepers of Clallam County (Washington) has an active volunteer stream monitoring program which they partially support by marketing services to clients, much like an environmental consulting firm (http://www.clallam.net/streamkeepers/html/monitoring_services.htm). By depending on volunteer effort to conduct much of the field work, they are able to provide a more cost-effective product. The contract work also provides their volunteers opportunities to get involved in interesting projects that can help to protect local watersheds, all while supporting the Streamkeepers program.

Whatever strategy or combination of approaches you choose, charging for monitoring services can help to diversify your funding sources, providing stability and sustainability. It also gets the data users to help pay for the information that will benefit them. And it may help to encourage that the data are used.

Writing Grants

Securing grants from government agencies, corporations and private foundations is a common and valuable means of sustaining volunteer monitoring programs. Grants can be especially useful for supporting a specific project, purchasing monitoring equipment or other defined activities (as opposed to general program support). Writing a successful grant proposal means paying careful attention to specifics in the request for proposals or applications (RFP or RFA). Think carefully about what you propose to do and to the needs and capabilities of your program and how well it fits with the RFP. Often funders will have specific issues, geographic areas, or communities they are interested in supporting, as well as precise reporting or other requirements (i.e., having an approved quality assurance project plan in place), so careful review of grant applications can save a great deal of time and effort.



Knowing the funding source and the core interests of the granting organization is critical – but don't limit yourself to organizations that focus on the environment. For example, if the resource you are monitoring is a drinking water supply, foundations or agencies that focus on human health may be interested in your efforts. While you can often be creative in describing your project to better fit the requirements of the funder, for long-term sustainability of a monitoring program, it is better to keep looking for an appropriate funding source than to “chase the dollars” by changing your program to meet an RFP.

- Summary – make this clear and concise, and put it at the beginning of your proposal, not the end. Reviewers often have to wade through hundreds of proposals so it is important to catch their interest immediately.
- Introduction – present information about the problem and the program, as well as the specific project for which funds are being sought.
- Objectives – define these in *measurable* terms, identify precisely what you intend to accomplish. For example, if you want to purchase additional equipment and provide training to add monitoring sites, state that you intend to add at least X number of sites and train X number of people.
- Methods – state these in *specific* terms. These are the steps to be taken to meet your objectives. Including a timeline that details when certain activities will take place can be very helpful, and is often required.
- Qualifications – describe the qualifications of the program and key personnel to be involved in the project. This is your opportunity to brag about past accomplishments, but be sure that they are relevant to the proposed work.
- Evaluation – explain how you will document that your objectives were met. Having measurable objectives makes this easier (“X number of communities will be using our monitoring data” rather than “increased use of monitoring data.”)
- Budget – include a brief narrative designed to support a more detailed table that describes expenditures arranged in specific categories and/or according to the timeline.
- Future or additional funding needed – identify how the program will continue after the grant, or what other funding is available to ensure successful completion of the project.
- Letters of support - include these to demonstrate the scope of your project and benefits it will bring. Such letters have the most strength when they are personalized by the supporter and state how the group writing the letter will benefit from, or be involved with, the work you’re intending to do.

Grant Proposal Writing Tips

- Proposal should reflect careful planning
- Tailor the proposal to meet the interest of the funding source
- Be specific and concise
- Follow application directions exactly
- Be realistic – don’t promise \$100K worth of work for a \$10K grant
- Attach letters of support for the project
- Use appendices for non-priority information; the reviewer can look at those if interested - focus on the facts in the proposal
- Use the team approach – team input often produces a more focused, understandable document. Outside reviewers can be especially valuable for spotting any areas of confusion
- Edit for clarity, conciseness, grammar and spelling
- Expect to write, rewrite and rewrite again (and again)

Photo credits:

- Charles River Watershed Association website - page 1
Meg Shearer – page 2 upper right, page 10
Elizabeth Herron - page 2 left photo, page 6
Art Garceau – page 2 bottom
Rivers Coalition (St Lucie River) website – page 3
Margret and H.A. Rey Center Water Watchers website - page 4
Eaton County Conservation District website – page 5
Frank Fetter – page 7
Lynn Grandpre – page 9
North Carolina Watershed Watch Program – page 11



Grant Writing Resources:

EPA Grant Writing tutorial (<http://www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm>)

Tips On Writing a Grant Proposal (<http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>)

Grant Proposal.com (<http://www.grantproposal.com/>) free resources for both advanced and beginner grant writers

Nonprofit Fundraising and Grant Writing (http://www.managementhelp.org/fndrsng/np_raise/np_raise.htm) resources for grassroots fundraising and grant writing

Resource Guides: Grant Proposal Writing (<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=16143&sid=108666>) University of Wisconsin - Madison

GrantSource Library (<http://research.unc.edu/grantsource/>) organized by category of resource, such as funding databases, funding alerts, specialized funding guides, and other including tips for writing grants from the University of North Carolina Office of Information and Communications

Resources for Writing Proposals (<http://www.spo.berkeley.edu/Links/writing.html>) University of California Berkeley

Grant Writing Resources (<http://www.uvm.edu/~ospuvvm/?Page=guides.htm>) University of Vermont - Office of Sponsored Programs

The Foundation Center (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) connects non-profits and grant makers, and provides tools to build capacity, such as grant writing support

Dr. Alice Christie's Grant Writing and Funding Opportunities (<http://www.west.asu.edu/ACHRISTIE/grants/guides.html>) includes glossaries, basic elements of grant writing, tutorials and tips

Grants Alert.com (http://www.grantsalert.com/grant_writer_resources.cfm) a list of sites that are helpful to grant writers including funding sources with deadlines and other application criteria

Finding, Writing, and GETTING the Right Grant for YOU (http://ed.fnal.gov/lincon/issue_funding.shtml) list of educational and funding resources developed by Fermi Labs

Seeking Grant Money Today (<http://thegrantplant.blogspot.com/>) describes basics about, current events in, and gives practical examples of how to achieve success in raising grant money



Grant Funding Sources:

Grant funding sources are too numerous to list here. However, to help get you started the list on the following page contains national grantors with priorities and goals that mesh with those of many volunteer monitoring programs. There are also a variety of books and websites that include listings of foundations, or public and private granting agencies. For instance, the Grantsmanship Center (<http://www.tgci.com/funding.shtml>) contains a listing of government grant sources, community foundations and more. Don't forget that there are also many local sources of funds. Search engines such as Google can help you to find grant funding sources that are particularly germane to your program's needs and goals.

- Funding Resources - Rural Information Center** (http://ric.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=5&tax_level=1&tax_subject=319)
- The Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection** (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/fedfund/>)
- Environmental Protection Agency - Environmental Education Grants** (<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed>)
- Environmental Protection Agency - Watershed Funding** (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/funding.html>)
- RBC Blue Water Project Grant** (<http://www.rbc.com/community/donations/blue-water.html>)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** (<http://www.nfwf.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Grants>)
- NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center** (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/funding_opportunities/funding_ner.html)
- LaMotte Company** compiled list of grant resources (<http://www.lamotte.com/pages/edu/grants.html>)
- Environmental Support Center** (<http://www.envsc.org/>) promotes the quality of human health, the natural environment, and community sustainability by increasing the organizational effectiveness of regional, state and local organizations by providing tools and grants to strengthen their strategic, fundraising, communications, technological and organizational capacity
- Environmental Grantmaking Association** (<http://www.ega.org/index.php>) includes a directory of funders, and links for Grantseekers (<http://www.ega.org/resources/index.php?op=links&issues=8>)
- Environmental Grantmaking Foundations** (<http://www.greatlakesdirectory.org/grants.htm>)
- A Michigan State University compilation of web pages and books of funding opportunities related to computer technology** (<http://www.greatlakesdirectory.org/grants2.htm>)
- Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI) website** (http://www.umich.edu/~meldi/5_env_grantmaking.html) focuses primarily on environmental funders who have supported minority organizations, diversity initiatives, projects and programs that are located in minority communities, or that benefit low-income communities or communities of color
- Funding Opportunities for Great Lakes Restoration Projects** (<http://www.theoec.org/PDFs/GLR%20funding%20resources%20final.pdf>) a joint publication of the Ohio Environmental Council and the Healing Our Waters®-Great Lakes Coalition, includes national and Ohio-focused opportunities
- Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities** (http://www.fundersnetwork.org/directory2784/directory_alphabet.htm) resource to assist organizations interested in creating more livable communities through better decision making regarding growth and development, including a directory of member organizations with contact information and web links
- Funding Opportunities – Environmental and Native American Issues** (<http://www.earthwrites.com/nonprofitlinks.html>)
- Environment Funding Sources** (<http://www.fundsnetsservices.com/searchresult.php?sbcid=13>)
- Patagonia Environmental Grants program** (<http://www.patagonia.com/web/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2927>)
- Tellabs Foundation** (<http://www.tellabs.com/about/foundation.shtml>) builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations by supporting sustainable initiatives in education, health and the environment
- The Captain Planet Foundation** (<http://www.captainplanetfdn.org/grants.html>)

Volunteer Effort as Match for Grants

Many granting agencies and organizations require that a grantee demonstrate that there is a commitment for the program beyond the specific project being funded. Known as matching funds, there may be a minimum amount (e.g., 25 % of the total project cost) or type (e.g., cash or in-kind contribution) of match required. Volunteer effort can often be applied toward in-kind contributions for match, making a grant much more competitive. Coconino Community College (http://www.coconino.edu/grants/matching_funds.html) has an excellent discussion of matching funds including some examples of matching costs that people tend to forget about.

In order to successfully use volunteer effort as match it is important to be able to document actual volunteer time and resources expended. Some programs have volunteers record the time they start and end their monitoring activities (including the time it takes to gather the monitoring equipment, drive/paddle to their monitoring site, etc.) right on their data sheets (see the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Service Stream program (http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vrap/documents/field_data_sheet.pdf for an example). Other programs have their volunteers keep track of their time on a “Volunteer Hours” form (see <http://www.clallam.net/streamkeepers/assets/applets/SKVolHrs.pdf> for an example). Other programs survey their volunteers regularly to determine the average time spent per sampling event. That amount of time is multiplied by the number of documented monitoring events to determine the total number of volunteer hours. Training sessions are also included when calculating matching contributions. Master Gardener (MG) programs, Cooperative Extension-affiliated volunteer programs that educate the public on gardening and horticultural issues, are experts at keeping track of volunteer hours. With active MG programs in 48 states and four Canadian provinces it is likely that there is a program near you that may be able to guide you. Hospital volunteer programs are another good resource for strategies on recording volunteer effort.

The ‘hourly rate’ equivalent you apply to your calculation may be set by the granting agency (e.g., minimum wage - U.S. Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration, <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm>) or may be determined in some other way. The Independent Sector, a leadership forum for charities, foundations, and corporate giving programs, annually computes a volunteer value rate that is widely accepted. Currently (2007) the value is \$19.51. It is based on the average hourly earnings of all production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) increased by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits (http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html). Some programs have successfully argued for a volunteer value rate equivalent to a comparable hourly rate for a paid position (i.e., what it would cost for a consultant to do the same work). But it is important to remember that just because a volunteer has a very high paying job, say she is a brain surgeon, when she monitors her time can't be charged at her surgery rate, but rather at a rate equivalent to the work she is doing for you. (However, if you have a volunteer who happens to be, say a professor of water resources at the local college, providing technical assistance to your program to choose monitoring sites, you could likely charge their time at their professional rate.)



Because environmental monitoring can be costly and resources will usually be limited, it makes sense to leverage your assets as much as possible. Other organizations with similar goals and objectives may have already developed procedures or training materials, or may be interested in creating those resources. By sharing existing materials you may be able to streamline your project development process or get a project off the ground by pooling resources. For example, your program may not have the budget to hire a monitoring coordinator on its own, but if that position were shared between two organizations with similar interests and geography, it might be possible. Sharing information with other monitoring groups may help you eliminate costly duplication of monitoring sites. Statewide monitoring councils are a great place to learn who is monitoring in your area and to help foster those connections. The National Water Quality Monitoring Council's website has links to a number of state and regional monitoring councils (http://acwi.gov/monitoring/regional_councils.html) Here are a few ways you will benefit from developing strong partnerships (adapted from <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/>):

- Receive or share funding
- Learn about funding sources
- Obtain or share technical assistance
- Obtain or share office space, equipment, or even staff
- Receive on-site supervision for volunteer projects
- Get help on speakers, field trips, telephone, web or e-mail support
- Obtain materials, videos, curricula, posters, public education flyers and displays
- Receive loaned or donated equipment
- Obtain maps and data on water quality, native species, soil types, wetlands, history, etc
- Track the status and progress of other programs in situations similar to yours
- Learn how to improve your own program by learning about what other programs are doing
- Discover what works well, as well as what hadn't worked so well
- Help test new protocols or products

Be creative when considering potential partners - look for resources that complement your own program and consider what your program has to offer others. Don't confine yourself to just partnering with other water quality monitoring programs. For example a media firm may be interested in helping you refine your outreach message in exchange for some great photos or good PR - especially as "being green" becomes more important to businesses.



Legislative Initiatives

Recognizing the importance of long-term monitoring, but the difficulty of adequately funding it, some states and local governments have enacted legislation to provide dedicated funding for monitoring and other environmental initiatives. For example, an amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution approved in 2008 raised the state's sales tax rate by 3/8 % in a measure known by its supporters as the *Clean Water, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage and Natural Areas Amendment*. Thirty-three percent of the money raised (estimated at approximately \$80 million annually) through this tax increase will be used to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, which includes monitoring activities. Much of the funding will be directed to non-profit and other community groups (<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/fiscal/files/ib2008Salestaxamend.pdf>).

Legislative Initiatives (continued)

Since 2002 all motorized watercraft (including canoes with electric motors) operating on inland waters in Maine have had to buy and display a "Preserve Maine Waters" sticker. Stickers for watercraft registered in Maine cost \$10 per year, while those for non-Maine registered boats cost \$20 per year (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/invasives/invsticker.htm>). Funds generated through this program primarily support aquatic invasive species prevention and management efforts, including volunteer monitoring and plant patrols.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) recently approved a similar program, called Blue Boating, through which TRPA will work with boaters to promote cleaner boating habits through a boat certification program. By 2010 boaters operating on Lake Tahoe (CA/NV) will be required to "self-certify" that they meet minimum clean boating standards during a registration process that results in their obtaining a Blue Boating Sticker (http://www.trpa.org/documents/docdwnlds/Shorezone6/Blue_Boating_Fact_Sheet.pdf). A portion of the fees collected from the stickers will be used for projects such as water quality monitoring, that help reduce the impact of boats to Lake Tahoe.

The Trust For Public Land's LandVote® Database is an excellent source of information about ballot and other initiatives for funding conservation efforts (http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=12010&folder_id=2386). This searchable database includes the history of various conservation finance measures that have been placed on the ballot, the amount of money anticipated to be raised through these efforts, and resources for starting your own initiatives

Ensuring that money generated through these initiatives is designated specifically for environmental efforts, including monitoring, can sometimes be difficult. But such assurances are critical for continued success of those programs. Particularly during tough economic times, it is essential that funds not be easily funneled into state or municipal general budgets. Having designated funding through these initiatives enables states to develop more comprehensive monitoring programs, increase use of monitoring data in long-range planning, and ultimately to have more effective resource management.



Get the Most for Your Money

Once you've actually secured program funding, it is important that you carefully manage those resources. Shopping around for monitoring supplies, equipment, or other services can help stretch your dollars. Vendor prices can vary significantly, so even if you've always bought from one supplier, continue to comparison shop. If you find a better price with another vendor, ask your usual source to meet or beat that price, or simply switch vendors.

Some vendors may also provide discounts to non-profit groups or universities. If your program doesn't meet the criteria needed to get the discount, ask if any of your partners do. If so, try to establish a process for purchase through them if possible. Working with partners to create bulk orders can also help you meet minimum counts for quantity discounts offered by some vendors.

Ask for in-kind support from local businesses. For example, see if your printing company will give you a discount or even waive the cost of printing your monitoring manuals if you list it as a sponsor.

Building your own equipment is another way of stretching your program budget, and of getting your handy volunteers more involved. *The Volunteer Monitor* newsletter (<http://www.epa.gov/volunteer/issues.htm>) frequently includes instructions for building monitoring equipment such as shallow water samplers, sampling rakes or incubators. Other sources for instructions on building monitoring equipment include Callam County Streamkeepers (http://www.clallam.net/streamkeepers/html/monitoring_usables.htm), Maryland's River and Streams (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/streams/volunteer/build equip.html>), Utah State University Extension (<http://extension.usu.edu/waterquality/files/uploads/PDF/Making%20equipment.pdf>), and University of Wisconsin-Extension (<http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/wav/monitoring/transTube.html>).

If you decide that the "hidden" costs of running your own analytical laboratory do not outweigh sending samples out, consider purchasing used or reconditioned equipment. Internet searches will provide links to suppliers, but don't overlook local laboratories that may be interested in selling surplus equipment or supplies. Manufacturers are often a good source for slightly older systems which they may have taken in as a trade. Appealing directly to manufacturers for surplus supplies may also result in donated equipment that may not be the most state-of-the-art, or near expiration dates, but which may meet your data needs.

You may even be able to obtain donated equipment from universities, laboratories or corporate research divisions that have changed priorities or protocols, or purchased the newest technology, resulting in surplus equipment or supplies. (These partners may also be able to provide hazardous waste disposal or other similar services free or at much lower cost than possible if purchased elsewhere). However, make sure that any donated equipment will be useful to your program, and that you will be able to use it in a timely fashion. A donation of thermometers may prove costly if they turn out to be mercury thermometers or not of the correct sensitivity to meet your data quality needs.

Remember the Keys to Successful Fundraising

The more different funding sources you tap, the more secure your financial base will be.

Ongoing support is harder to find than start-up funding. But monitoring by nature is long-term, so funding needs to be long-term – keep your fundraising efforts focused on your long-term goals and needs.

Don't just fundraise; raise funds to reach your program goals. If your organization has four committees coordinating fundraising events but none coordinating program needs – it's time to refocus!

Whoever is using the monitoring data should be helping to pay for it.

In-kind support, such as donations of technical expertise, equipment, or laboratory analyses can really help keep a program going.

Fostering diverse partnerships can help strengthen your program and stretch your resources.

CONTACTS

Linda Green

Phone: 401-874-2905, lgreen@uri.edu

Elizabeth Herron

Phone: 401-874-4552, emh@uri.edu

Arthur Gold

Phone: 401-874-2903, agold@uri.edu

University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension

Coastal Institute in Kingston, Rm 105

Kingston, RI 02881

Kris Stepenuck

Phone: 608-265-3887, kris.stepenuck@ces.uwex.edu

Robin Shepard

Phone: 608-262-1843, rlshepar@wisc.edu

University of Wisconsin Extension Service

445 Henry Mall, Room 202

Madison WI 53706

This material is based upon work supported in part by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Integrated Water Quality Program, under Agreement No. RI002004-04630. Contribution # 5158 of the RI Agricultural Experiment Station