

What is Strategic Outreach and how can you apply it to achieve your program goals?

Strategic Outreach is the practice of using a combination of direct outreach and targeted messages, materials and tactics to influence policy, industry or other external stakeholders in order to achieve specific conservation and policy goals. These audiences are often steeped in the subject matter and come with their own agenda. Successfully influencing these subject matter experts requires well-thought out, coordinated and strategic engagement.

This is solely focused on targeted outreach with key audiences and will be integrated in the larger, existing public and media communications plan.

The following is a Strategic Outreach shell that you can systematically work through to determine who you're trying to influence, what you want them to do in order to achieve your conservation and policy objectives and how to effectively do it. Based on this plan, we would incorporate this into the overall Communications work plan.

Strategic Outreach Plan

Background:

The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Island Conservation, and PRBO Conservation Science have embarked upon an ambitious project to protect and restore the South Farallon Islands by removing nonnative mice. The Farallon Island National Wildlife Refuge hosts the largest seabird breeding colony in the continental U.S. – more than 300,000 birds of 13 species, including half the world's population of Ashy Storm-petrels which breed on the Refuge. It is also the largest breeding colony of Western Gulls in the world.

Long important to marine wildlife, the significance of the Farallon Islands was recognized in 1909 when President Theodore Roosevelt established the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge (FNWR). The South Farallon Islands were added to the Refuge in 1968. The Refuge is located 27 miles west of San Francisco (within San Francisco County and San Francisco city limits).

The islands have a legacy of human disturbance. Wildlife populations were decimated in the 19th century due to hunting and egg collection. Heavy disturbance of wildlife continued into the 20th century, but when the USFWS began active stewardship in 1968, human disturbance was greatly reduced due to steps taken by PRBO and USFWS, including:

- Closing off sensitive areas to all human contact (including biologists)
- Controlling introduced (non-native) flora and fauna.

- Installation of boardwalks to prevent walking on sensitive habitat and limiting the activities of human residents to only a few established trails
- Night lighting is minimized and screened from view so that nocturnal species are not disturbed.
- Removing all unneeded structures to maximize natural habitat available to wildlife.
- Limiting the number of people allowed on the island at one time

Further restoring the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge by removing the non-native house mouse population will help eliminate the effects of long term human disturbance to Farallon wildlife.

While there is potential for some opposition to the restoration activities on South Farallon Islands, by encouraging targeted agency, academic and NGO involvement and understanding and clearly communicating our story, we can build credibility, gain respect, and solidify the support we need to ensure the long-term success of the South Farallon Islands Restoration Project.

Program Objective:
(What do you want to happen?)

Protect and restore the ecosystem of the Farallones, including seabirds and other native species, by removing non-native house mice.

Strategic Outreach Objectives:
(What do you want the outreach to achieve?)

- Generate agency, NGO and academic understanding and support for (or non-opposition to) the South Farallon Islands Restoration Project.
- ANYTHING ELSE TO DEFINE THAT IS TARGETED OUTREACH SPECIFIC? We will review the larger communications plan objectives to see if anything should be incorporated for strategic outreach objectives in this section.

Commented [alc1]: Some of these within larger plan include ensuring good communication within larger hierarchy of FWS agency, donor support/fundraising (IC and PRBO), garnering support from prominent local/regional institutions: CalAcad, Aquariums (Monterey Bay Aquarium, Steinhart Aquarium.), Oakland Natural History Museum, Marine Mammal Center in Marin, etc, what about the Cornell Lab of O, citizen groups, Farallon Patrol

Audiences - Attitude & Desired Outcome:

Note: For this planning session, we'll identify 1-2 top targets (or least developed) to work through and will tackle the other audiences via email or an additional team call.

Audience - List the individuals, agencies, funders, media or organizations that you need support from on this issue.	Attitude - Describe each audience in terms of current knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to the issue. What	Desired Outcome - Describe desired knowledge level, attitude and behavior from each audience related to the
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	motivates them? What risks do they face? What social, economic, demographic and political factors affect them?	issue.
Agencies		
NGOs		
Elected Officials		
Coalitions		
Business/Regional Outreach		
Research and Educational Institutions		
Interested Individuals		
Funding		
Detractors		

Partners:
(Who will help you influence your audiences?)

List the individuals, agencies or organizations that will partner on this issue and define their role.

Partner - List the individuals, agencies, funders, media or organizations that will partner with you on the project/objective.	Position - Describe each partner's position on the project/objective. What is their motivation? What do they bring to the table? Strengths/Weaknesses?	Role - Describe their role in helping achieve the program and communications & outreach objectives.
ABC		

Strengths/Opportunities:

Note: From larger communications plan – does this need to be refined for the outreach audiences? Take a look as a group.

- PRBO Conservation Science and the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge are respected for their history of research and conservation work on the Farallon Islands and have the trust of many people.

- Over 330 rodent eradications have been successfully carried out worldwide proving that it can be done and providing examples of the benefits.
- Island Conservation has a strong track record of successfully carrying out invasive species removal projects like this.
- The community of people that are concerned with seabird conservation can be leveraged to garner support and funding in the SF Bay area. Partners have an opportunity to get positive media attention to invasive species threats to seabirds and other island species.

Weaknesses/Challenges:

Note: From larger communications plan – does this need to be refined for the outreach audiences? Take a look as a group.

- ***Internal Disagreements***

Personnel within FWS and other federal agencies have varying opinions regarding methods of rodent eradication and their likelihood of success.

- ***Organized Opposition***

Organized opposition to the project has occurred (e.g. Wildcare) and will likely continue. There may be other groups to emerge in opposition (e.g. Bay area anti-toxics groups, Californians for Alternatives to Toxics) . List serves and blogs make it very easy for groups to mobilize their membership.

Groups and individuals dedicated to a philosophy that embraces individual animal rights will likely oppose the project.

Groups and individuals focused on animal welfare may oppose methods they consider inhumane – specifically anti-coagulant rodenticide.

Toxicological impact to ecosystem may be a concern for some individuals, groups, and agencies.

Use of rodenticide in general and brodifacoum specifically may be a point of opposition.

- ***Misinformation***

Many people are not aware of the value of the Refuge's natural resources.

Many people are not aware that mice are not native to the islands.

Many people don't realize the harm that nonnative rodents cause to wildlife and plants.

Many people are concerned about any toxicants and don't know the difference between them or their long term consequences.

Many people don't understand that there really are not other good or proven methods for rodent eradication other than the use of rodenticide.

Many people don't know about eradication success stories elsewhere, and the benefits that resulted for protected species.

Some people view recent restoration projects on Rat Island and Anacapa Island as not successful or had devastating non-target impacts.

- ***Possible Backlash from Public***

The most damaging backlash would be from people who do not want toxicants used on a wildlife refuge no matter what. Disagreements among conservationists over the appropriate toxicant for the project could become visible to the public and lead to an organized negative response to mouse eradication or even a potential lawsuit. Some reaction among animal rights activists could occur, including attempting to stop the project through the court system.

Strategic Outreach Strategy:
(How will you achieve your goal/objective?)

Describe the outreach strategy/approach that the program is going to execute in order to achieve the Strategic Outreach objectives. What overall approach will help change behaviors and attitudes of your target audiences? How can you align your goals with your audience's goals?

Strategic Outreach Tactics:
(What will you do to achieve your goal/objective?)

Strategic Outreach tactics are the specific actions being taken to fulfill the Strategic Outreach Strategy (defined by the identified Outreach objectives for the Program Objective). This includes careful consideration of resources (staff & financial), what will be most effective with the target audiences given their attitude, our strengths/weaknesses, challenges, opportunities and potential partners. Where can we make the biggest difference to move the needle?

While developing and the bulk of the execution of a Strategic Outreach Plan will be program driven, many strategies and tactics will involve close collaboration with your Communications lead. They will have some plan input and execute the tactics that fall under their responsibility.

Not all the listed tactics are necessarily effective for any given audience. The objective is to assess what you are trying to accomplish and with who and then apply the right tactics that they will pay attention to. This is often leveraging the places and people they trust and already get information from. Be creative and credible.

Project Management

General Tactics: Finalize strategic marketing plan and budget, Develop a detailed work plan with deliverables, assignments and due dates. Secure Marketing Lead feedback, Manage partner conversations, Establish regular meeting with core team when execution begins, Agree upon and establish who in each organization has the final say on materials, outreach, events, etc, Finalize MOU, Work with Program Director on ELT communications.

Outreach

General Tactics: Develop audience, influentials and partner list, in person visits, email communications, site visits, events (see event category below), third party endorsements.

Events

General Tactics: Workshops, conferences, cocktail events, site visits.

Materials

General Tactics: Messages, Fact sheets, brochures, briefing packets/books, white papers, website, power point, maps, photos, charts, market (audience) research.

Media

General Tactics: Articles, OpEds, Letter to the Editors, Press release, media list development, Blogs, Radio, Broadcast, site visits, message training, press trips, phone briefings, Editorial Board visits, paid advertising (online banner ads, Billboards, newspapers).

Social Media

General Tactics: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Enewsletter