



## MN Lakes & Rivers Advocates

Protect Our Lake Legacy

[www.mnlakesandrivers.org](http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org)

**BUILDING A GRASSROOTS BASE TO PROTECT LAKES AND RIVERS**

# GOALS

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- Increase the quality and quantity of constituent communications between lake advocates and legislators in order to advance a pro-lake agenda at the local, county and state level.

# MYTHS ABOUT GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

1. Grassroots advocates must follow and understand the details of a complex legislative process to be effective.
2. It takes thousands of people taking action in order to get a legislator's attention.

# REALITIES OF GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

- A lobbyist can cue grassroots on important steps and timing in the process – YOU know the issue, YOU vote, YOU know your story and position. That is enough.
- Collective Action by only five people can be effective – Quality of communication matters, direct personal, well timed and consistent communication makes a big difference.

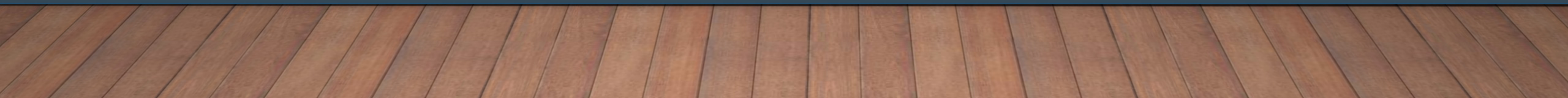
# GRASSROOTS POWER TRIANGLE

Highly personal tactics – (visits, one on one communication, letters, long term relationship, etc.)

Small numbers have impact.

Less personal (petitions, rallies email campaigns, postcards, etc.)

High number of advocates needed to have impact



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- Civic Infrastructure – relationships with other active citizens that are organizing people in their jurisdictions; faith leaders, leaders of institutions, political leaders, business leaders, local resource managers, local elected officials, etc.
- Jurisdiction – where you are and the groups you are organizing are. You define your jurisdiction. Your family is the smallest jurisdiction, then faith community, lake association, township, city, county, state and so forth. Build up from the closest group in which you are a leader.

# LEADERSHIP

- Transactional Leadership – is the result of a kind of bargain struck by people or groups in which each gives something of value to another.
- Transformational – occurs when citizen leaders or elected officials engage with each other in ways that go beyond narrow self interest to a concern for the common good.

Leaders have power because they have constituencies. There IS power in relationships.

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- *All are engaged in decision and policy making that contributes to the common good.*
- *All implement policies grounded in civic principles in the places where they have the authority to act.*

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- **Electoral Politics** – Can be effective – encourages over reliance on elected officials to *do for* rather than to *do with* public, tension between rapid electoral mobilizing and slower organizing approach to relationships and base building – civic infrastructure.

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  - Map around an issue (water) in your jurisdiction. If you are a Lake Association, you are mapping the people or institutions *in your community*. If a COLA, then in your county.
  - Identify key decision-making institutions or associations that are related to water issues. Write these names in a ring around the issue: local businesses, real estate agents, developers, local newspaper editors, local agency resource managers, churches, local professional organizations, local elected officials, other lake associations, other civic organizations etc.

# POWER MAPPING STEPS

- Step 2 - Map individuals associated with the institutions.
  - Put the names of 2-3 individuals who are associated with each of those institutions in the second ring (moving out concentrically) around the issue of water. These can be people you know or don't know. Of course, there may be more than one person associated with each of the institutions, or there may be some institutions where people don't know the names. Here you can note a question like, "Who is the woman who is serving as President of the local Chamber of Commerce?"

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  - Ask participants to think about people they know connected to these key individuals. The purpose of this is to help identify easier ways to access the individuals or institutions by tapping into existing relationships between people. At this step, you can note any relationships that members in the group have with the people listed and any information you have about them. Encourage people to be creative in thinking about how they may be connected to the people brainstormed.
  - This information should go in the third ring around the issue - water.



# POWER MAPPING STEPS

- Step 4: Draw relational power lines.
  - Review the networks that the group has mapped out. You can do this by drawing lines connecting people and institutions that have relations to each other. Some people will have many connections while others may not have any. This step helps the group to identify what may be called the “nodes of power” within a given network.

# POWER MAPPING STEPS

- Step 5: Target priority relationships
  - Make some decisions. Circle the few people that have the most relational power lines drawn to them. Involving these people through your group's current relationships is a priority. Another thing to consider may be a person or institution in the map that doesn't necessarily have many different relational lines running to him/her/it but nonetheless has a few critical ones and seems to hold a lot of influence. If you can identify a priority person/institution for which there isn't a clear relationship, the take away may be to go and do some homework about this person/institution. Find a connection.

# POWER MAPPING STEPS

- Step 6 - Make a plan
  - Create some action steps. These are fairly straightforward. For instance, Maria is going to talk to her mom about the Chamber of Commerce. Bob is going to ask Mary Jo to help him request a meeting with a local bank manager. Determine the best approaches to accessing these individuals and institutions through relationships and who will be responsible for what by when. The goal is for members of your organization to have a one-on-one meetings with each of the key civic leaders you have identified.

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- Through creating relationships with these leaders, to build the civic infrastructure needed to advance your mission and support both local civic leadership and build the civic infrastructure to support an advocacy campaign.
- Bring them (and their political networks) into your efforts to make change in your jurisdiction.

# ONE ON ONE MEETINGS – THE TOOL FOR ORGANIZING PEOPLE

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- **1-1s are an entry point for citizens into public life.** These meetings are never done to “get to know someone” or to push membership in an organization. Rather you are exploring the development of a public relationship.

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- **Your 1-1 meetings should last about 30 minutes.- about one cup of coffee.** Don't violate this time frame. Use this time to learn the water interests of the individuals with whom you are meeting. Focus on public business, not necessarily on friendship. If the first 30 minutes go well, then schedule another meeting.

# ONE ON ONE MEETINGS – THE TOOL FOR ORGANIZING PEOPLE

- **In your 1-1 meetings, ask:**
  - Why are things like this?
  - Why are people doing what they are doing with regard to the lake?
  - Why don't we spend more of our time taking steps to protect the public waters, a cornerstone of our local economy and way of life?
  - Learn what they believe the issues regarding water are, and their views on potential solutions or gaps to a solution. Look for overlying areas between their agenda and yours.

# ONE ON ONE MEETINGS – THE TOOL FOR ORGANIZING PEOPLE

- **Listen more than talk. Don't give speeches. Ask clarifying questions, like:**
  - Why do you say that?
  - How so?
  - What does that mean to you?
  - Why does that matter?

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  - Offer to write articles for their publications and newsletters.

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  - Is an art form that requires patient development and use of diplomatic skills.

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- Include elected officials on your mailing lists for your newsletters and updates.

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- Use the Media Tool of the CAN system to place articles, letters to the editor and opinion pieces in your local papers and radio. Send out press releases on your events and efforts and SUCCES stories.

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- Encourage your members to make these emails and news stories personal by changing the text to suit their situation and personal story.



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