

# RIVER FUNDRAISING ALERT

Alternatives to Direct Mail

Volume 7, No. 3/Fall 2000

## Alternative Membership Strategies for Small Grassroots Groups

by Pat Munoz

**B**uilding a base of individual members\* is vital to the health of almost any nonprofit organization that is dedicated to the long-term stewardship of a river or watershed.

In addition to a steady, unrestricted, predictable source of income, members provide many resources/benefits, including:

- political clout
- feedback on the relevancy and usefulness of your program and leaders
- prospects for larger gifts, stock donations, bequests
- a potential audience for your events and special appeals
- new skills and contacts
- volunteers and board members
- visibility in the community
- credibility with foundations and corporations

In past issues, we have looked at the pros and cons of having members, at the challenges of building membership, and at large-scale direct mail as one strategy for meeting this challenge. In this issue, we will look at other strategies which can precede, supplement, or even replace large-scale direct mail in garnering new members.

### 1. Small Recruitment Mailings

While large direct mailings of several thousand pieces are probably not within the reach of small groups that are just starting out, small mailings of several hundred pieces can usually be easily handled by staff and volunteers, and often produce surprisingly good results. There are several keys to doing these small mailings:

#### Lists.

The list used is the most important element in any mail recruiting effort. The best lists are lists of friends, relatives, neighbors and co-workers of staff, board, and volunteers who have an interest in your issue. Next comes your "in-house" list, which includes anyone who has called and asked for information, people who have attended your events, buyers of your merchandise, and past members who have not renewed. After these come lists of other local environmental groups, local canoe clubs, or local fishing groups. Sometimes, groups will provide these lists free, or will agree to exchange lists.

In trying to decide whether a list will work for you, ask yourself whether the people on the list have values or

interests in common with your existing members. Also make sure that the list is current (mailing lists can go out of date in a matter of months).

#### The Outer Envelope.

With small mailings of less than 500 pieces, the important thing is to make the letter look as personal as possible, in order to get the recipient to open it. If your budget allows, one thing I advise is the use of a colorful first-class stamp. While first class stamps cost twice as much as using a bulk mail permit, for small mailings they will earn their keep by making the envelope more attractive, by being

*Make your letter look as personal as possible.*



easier to deal with (the Post Office has all kinds of rules about bulk mail), and by insuring timely delivery of your solicitation. Another trick is to hand-write the addresses. While this is time consuming, it is a good use of volunteer labor, and almost guarantees that your letter will be opened. If you can't handwrite the addresses, use clear labels

which make your letters look hand-typed.

#### The Letter.

You do not need to be a professional writer to write a good new member letter. However, there are a few rules which generally hold true:

- Make your letter look as personal as possible. Use stationary. Start with a warm salutation, and end with a

*(continued on page 2)*

\*"Members" are individuals who agree to pay an annual fee (dues) and in some cases, to perform certain activities, in order to "belong" to an organization and to receive specific benefits and privileges.

## Alternative Membership Strategies

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personal signature. Include a personal, handwritten note, if possible. Indent your paragraphs. Single space paragraphs and double space between paragraphs. Use more “you’s” than “we’s”.

- Tailor your letter to your audience.

Your letter will be more effective if it addresses the needs and interests of the people it is addressed to. If you are using a canoe club list, talk about the ways in which your work will benefit canoeists.

- Make your letter interesting. The first two paragraphs and the last few are the most frequently read. Make them hard-hitting and attention getting. Use emotion, if appropriate. Communicate a sense of urgency, and demonstrate an immediate need.

- Be explicit with the reader that you are asking him to become a member of your organization, and clear about how much you want him to give. Say what his contributions will accomplish.

- Stress the positive. While describing the immediate threats, establish the efficacy of past actions and your future plans.

- Design your letter with lots of white space so that it is reader-friendly. Use wide margins and short paragraphs. Use bullets to set off lists.

- Use a “P.S.” to make a final appeal, repeat the immediate need, or suggest a higher level of giving.

- Make your letter at least two pages. Two to three page letters generally do better than one-pagers, probably because people equate length with substance.

\* Whenever possible, tie your letter to a current event or issue. If flooding or water quality issues have been in the papers recently, be sure to mention the work you are doing in these areas.

\* Get someone who has direct mail experience to critique your letter. Don’t operate in a vacuum!

### Other Essential Components

It is important to include a response

card and a reply envelope in your mailing. A remit envelope which includes a response form on the back flap can also be used. Enclosures are optional, and can be counterproductive if they distract the reader from the business at hand, i.e., writing a check and mailing it in. They can also significantly increase postage costs.

### Mailing Times

The best times to do small, targeted mailings are the same as those for large mailings, January-March and September-November being the best months, and April, July, August and December being the worst. But timing is probably less important for these mailings, and it is always better to do the mailing in April or July than not do it at all!

### Tracking and Response

It is essential to track how many responses you get to your mailing, how much money it brings in, and how much it cost. You can do this with a simple form where you log in daily receipts. By capturing this information, you can calculate your overall response rate (groups often get 3%, 4%, or even 5% response to these mailings, although normal response to a large direct mail is about 1%), your average gift, and your cost per member. If you are careful, you can add significantly to your member base with these mailings, and at the same time break even, or even make a little money.

## 2. Face-to-Face Requests

Most fundraisers will tell you that asking people one-on-one is the most productive way to get new members (if by “productive” you mean the method that produces the highest percentage of “yes” responses). Statistics show that one out of every 3-4 people you solicit in person (provided they have an interest in

your cause and a connection to you or your organization) will respond positively. Asking in person allows you to hone your presentation skills and to overcome any psychological barriers you may have around asking others for money. It also teaches you to field difficult questions and allows you to brainstorm with people whose ideas and personal connections could be of great use to you.

However, asking people in person can be extremely time-consuming and inefficient. As an individual recruitment strategy, it is best used opportunistically, to approach friends, relatives, and colleagues who share your values, or even people you encounter at parties or on planes. Also be sure to ask anyone who drops by or calls your office to join. The point is to create a culture of ongoing personal membership solicitation in your organization. Be sure to share stories of recently recruited members and urge your board, staff and volunteers to do likewise.

## 3. Inquiry Follow-up

While this one may seem obvious, not everyone may be taking advantage of it. When people call, write, attend a presentation, or email your organization for information about your issues, your programs, etc., they have self-identified as your “hottest” prospects for membership. Develop a system to send these folks an immediate, attractive recruitment packet, including a reply form and envelope, or a remit envelope. You will be pleasantly surprised at the results.

Be sure to keep these names, and if they do not respond to your follow-up, add them to your “in-house” prospect list. That way, you can continue to pursue them through some of the other strategies listed here.

#### 4. Events

River trips, concerts, and other events sponsored by your organization where people pay a certain amount to attend can be used effectively to increase member rolls. The easiest way is to tell the event participant that in addition to the river trip, concert, etc., they will also be receiving a complimentary one-year membership in your organization.

There are several caveats with this strategy. First, people who are given a complimentary membership, even when they have paid to attend your event, won't renew their membership next year as consistently as someone who "intentionally" signs up to become a member. While you can expect at least 50% of your members who joined "intentionally" last year to renew, a lower percentage of those who received complimentary memberships will do so. This disadvantage is usually offset, however, by the fact that it costs you nothing to recruit these members.

The more personal contact you and your board and staff have with prospective members at the event, the more likely they will later become "intentional" members by renewing their support when asked. This is why it is so important for board members and staff to attend such events and "schmooze" with participants. Some kind of "pitch" for the organization helps, too, and should always be a part of any event.

Second, events do not usually draw non-members unless they are publicized widely or event "hosts" are asked to bring their family and friends. River

trips can be advertised in the "calendar" section of local papers. Concert hosts can be asked to send out several invitations with personal notes to people they think might be interested. And the Internet now provides a new medium for getting the word out to a wider community about such upcoming events and gatherings.

A special welcome letter should probably be sent to these new members with their first newsletter so they understand clearly that they have been given a complimentary one-year membership.

#### 5. House Parties

Parties at people's homes are one of the less expensive and easier ways to garner new members. The trick is to find a host who will provide a place for the party, donate the food, and send out invitations to his/her friends. It is helpful to recruit several other hosts whose names go on the invitation and who also commit to inviting 5-10 of their friends. This insures that you will be reaching out to new people.

Members can be recruited in two ways. 1. You charge a specified amount for the party, and tell people that they will

receive a complimentary membership as in "events" above; 2. You do not charge for the party, but make a "pitch" for people to join at the event. You may

even want to "plant" someone in the audience to get the ball rolling by pulling out their checkbook and signing up.

#### 6. Booths at River Festivals, Stores, Busy Access Points on a River, etc.

Recruiting new members from among the crowd at a river festival or out in front of the local REI store has worked for some groups and also provides a great opportunity to use (and train) volunteers and increase visibility. A few tips that will help make this strategy work better include:

- Have teams of two or three people manning the booth, so that one person can be taking checks while the other is talking to potential members.
- Use recruiters who are outgoing and assertive.
- Rehearse the "pitch" for membership with recruiters in advance.
- For long stints, have several recruiters lined up so they can spell each other.
- Target peak hours (for example, noon to 4 p.m. at a store).
- Have an exciting premium or a special membership offer to attract attention.
- Have attractive maps, posters, etc. to draw people to your booth.

#### 7. Raffles

Raffles fall into a special category. They are a particularly appropriate strategy for raising money for river groups, because they are fairly easy to organize and can be quite lucrative. Add to this the fact that they provide an excellent way to recruit new members, and you've got a real winner!

The down side to raffles is that they require a good deal of work as well as good lists of potential ticket buyers to



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be feasible. If your group has a good volunteer corps, and access to addresses/telephone numbers of canoeists, fisherfolk, or other targeted audiences, you might want to try a raffle. And if you do, you can make people who buy a certain minimum number of tickets (such as a \$20 book of tickets), complimentary members of your organization. Again, the percentage that will renew their membership the year following the raffle will be smaller than for members who join "intentionally", but enough will usually decide to stay with you to make it well worth your while.

*Note:* In some states, raffles through the mail are regulated by the state and require a permit which can be expensive to obtain. Using certain wording in the raffle ticket may exempt you from the need to register. Be sure to check this out if you are contemplating a raffle.

### 8. Speaking Engagements

If you have people in your organization who enjoy going out and addressing large groups of people, this is definitely a strategy you should use. The trick is to get your speakers to put a strong pitch for membership into their talks. The pitch must be worded very specifically ("We ask you to consider joining Friends of the XYZ River with a gift of \$35. Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter and invitations to our member breakfasts. I have forms with me and will be happy to take your check, which should be made out to Friends of the XYZ River.").

It helps if there are two people at the meeting, so that one person can be passing out forms, and/or remit envelopes and collecting checks while the other person continues speaking or answering questions. This strategy would combine well with a small

recruitment mailing to the group's list immediately following your talk.

### 9. Newsletters and Brochures

Every newsletter, brochure or publication that your organization puts out should contain a plug for membership and a form that prospective members can use to join. Don't forget that even if only your members receive your newsletters, they may get passed on to a friend, relative, or co-worker!

You can increase memberships from this source by distributing your newsletter or other publications widely. Including a loose form or remit envelope will also increase response in certain circumstances. Leave copies of them in obvious places like the local outfitter shop, Patagonia store, or canoe livery. A friendly manufacturer may be willing to include them with other materials that accompany purchases of canoes, kayaks, or other large items. Ask sister organizations to include copies in their mailings, send a copy to people who call asking for information, consider putting them on car windows at popular riverside put-in or take-out spots, etc.

Because this strategy can get expensive, it is wise to try to track response by making the membership forms clearly distinguishable from the forms used in other kinds of recruiting or coding them, and keeping a running record of how many new

members come in this way. This will at least give you a general idea of the payoff for these activities.

*Note:* Response to a brochure or newsletter sent alone to a prospective member is generally lower than response to a new member letter. Think twice about mailing out newsletters/brochures by themselves unless the costs are being subsidized by another organization or you are using them to "warm up" prospects for a subsequent letter solicitation.

### 10. Public Relations/Outreach

In an ideal world, the good work your organization does would motivate hundreds of people to spontaneously join your organization. Unfortunately, with so many groups and causes

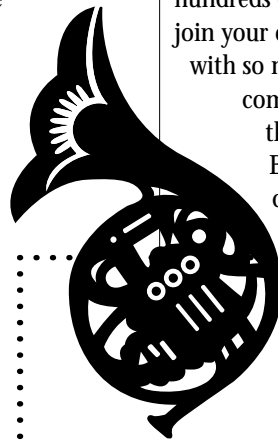
competing for people's attention, this does not usually happen.

But creating a "buzz" in your community by frequently

getting your organization and issue into the public spotlight should still create a steady stream of "over-the-transom" members. At the same time, it can make all the other member recruitment strategies you employ work much more effectively. There are whole books written on this topic (two of the best are *River Talk! Communicating a Watershed Message*, by River

Network, (503) 241-3506 and *How to Tell and Sell your Story, Parts I and 2*, by the Center for Community Change, (202) 342-0567), but here are a few quick tips to stimulate your thinking:

- Identify a clear mission and goals for your organization and a clear



**Blow your own horn  
in your community  
to inspire support of  
your cause.**

message which resonates for your public;

- Develop a public relations/communications plan which targets key audiences and strategies;
- Develop a logo, symbol or other identifying element for use on all of your materials;
- Repeat your message over and over again in as many forums as possible;
- Always include your telephone number, address and web site on public communications;
- Keep your existing members and supporters well informed about your accomplishments;
- Personally cultivate reporters, editors, TV producers, and radio announcers who cover issues that are central to your work;
- Become known as a quick, dependable source of accurate information for your river/watershed.

## 11. Personal Telephone Calls

Experts say that recruiting new members by telephone can work under certain circumstances:

- 1) you have highly motivated, experienced volunteer callers who believe in your organization and are not afraid to ask for money;
- 2) your cause is compelling and dynamic;
- 3) your "prospects" have some connection to your organization (they may be expired members, or people who have called your office for information, or friends and co-workers of your callers).

One good thing about telephone recruiting is that you don't need a lot of money to do a test. You can do a round



*If you decide to try a telephone effort, be sure to get advice from someone who has expertise in this field.*

of calls and find out very quickly if there is enough interest to make this a cost-effective

strategy. You can also fine-tune or modify your "pitch" very easily based upon the intelligence you gather in your calls.

One caveat. This is a specialized area. If you decide to try a telephone effort, be sure to get advice from someone who

has expertise in this field.

## 12. Web Recruiting

A new entry in the membership recruiting field is the World Wide Web. Any group that has a Web site can, and should, be using it to recruit new members. While most experts doubt that the Web will totally replace other strategies, there is agreement that the Web will become a more and more important way to communicate with, and motivate, existing and prospective members, and the time is coming soon when any organization that does not have a presence on the Web will be at a distinct disadvantage.

Web recruiting strategies can be as simple as providing prospective members with a telephone number to call for membership information, or as sophisticated as an online form that prospects can fill out and receive an instant membership certificate! The important thing is to construct a Web site that is interesting and compelling, and a method for joining that is simple

and clear, for prospects who find you on the Web. Including a "button" for requesting a free copy of your newsletter is an easy way to capture names and addresses. For more Web recruiting tips, see the article on page 6.

## And One to Avoid—Free Memberships

In my experience, giving free memberships to people who are not connected in some way with your organization in the hopes that they will renew in a year doesn't work. People don't value something they are given for nothing, so when it comes time to renew, they don't. I tried an experiment with this once and gave free memberships to people who took raft trips down the Grand Canyon. The renewal rate for these people (after receiving a year of free newsletters) was abysmal.

## Conclusion

In my experience, the best strategy for membership recruiting is to create a culture of ongoing and continuous outreach to new members by staff, board and volunteers. If you are successful at doing this, using a combination of the strategies mentioned above (and probably several we haven't thought of), you will create a constant stream of new members in your door which will allow your organization to grow and flourish. ▲

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# Snagging Members on the World Wide Web For Nonprofits, Web Site Content is the Bait that Works Best

by David Jenkins

Unlike the eight-legged web weavers we see in nature, river advocates cannot depend on potential members to accidentally fly into their web site and get stuck there. Competition for the public's time online is fierce as web entrepreneurs engage in multi-million dollar ad campaigns to vie for people's attention. Most nonprofits do not have the financial resources to compete at that level. Even if they did, it would probably not be the wisest use of the organization's money and effort. Still, the web can be a good membership generator, but only if organizations find a way to compete for their share of the traffic.

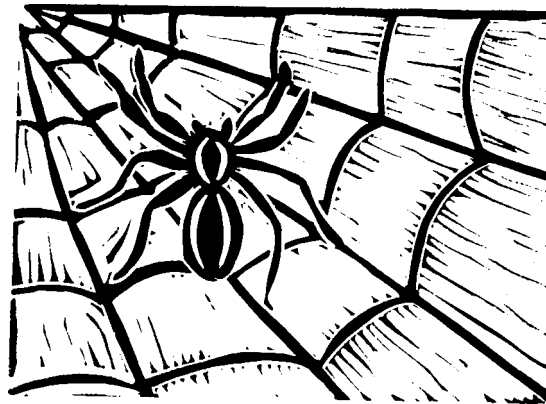
## Appeal to a Broader Audience

Luring traffic to an organization's web site does require some targeted marketing, but before marketing can even have a chance, the destination that you are trying to market must be an appealing one. Too many nonprofit groups create dry, boring, web sites that are targeted primarily at their most avid supporters. The key to attracting new members from the web is to have a site that has appeal to a larger audience of non-members. That sounds pretty simple, but it is very often overlooked.

Most organizations have a niche, a purpose and reason for existing that is unique. It is that uniqueness that can often guide them to web content that not only reflects the organization's mission, but also provides information or services that broader segments of the public will want to access. Information about the river or watershed that your

group is dedicated to can bring people to your site if the information is targeted to serving a public need.

For example, an organization dedicated to a specific river may choose to develop a recreational guide to the river that shows public access, highlights notable features, and displays current water conditions. The organization could then have the site promoted by, and linked to, state and local Chambers of Commerce, tourism bureaus, local guide or travel related web sites, even canoe club or fishing organization web sites. An informative guide that details the wildlife, history and geology of the river could be tied into classes at area schools.



*Unlike the eight-legged web weavers we see in nature, river advocates cannot depend on potential members to accidentally fly into their web site and get stuck there.*

## Use Your Issues

Organizations that are involved in grassroots issue campaigns can use those campaigns to drive potential members

to their web site. Placing an automatic letter to a targeted agency or elected official on the site is a great interactive feature that makes it easy for the public to weigh in on an issue. The organization can then post alerts to various list servers, newsgroups, and web bulletin boards to direct people to the letter — and to the site. Placing a link to the site in the alert makes responding to it very quick and easy.

The American Canoe Association (ACA) has found that these grassroots web campaigns generate a lot of traffic to its web site. Three recent campaigns generated more than 2,000 visitors to the ACA web site and resulted immediately in dozens of new members. The

ACA also generates traffic by providing very basic canoeing and kayaking information on its web site that is targeted at non-members, and by trying to make sure that any news story referencing the organization — even this one — lists the web site ([www.acanet.org](http://www.acanet.org)).

## Get on Search Engines

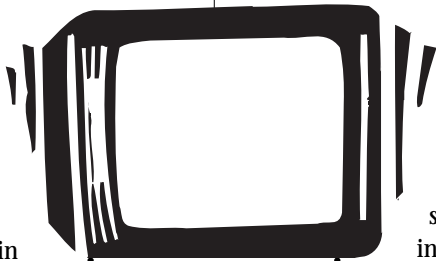
For a web site to generate traffic it also needs to be easily found by search engines, and that does not mean just when someone enters in the organization's name. This is done, in part, by listing key words and phrases related to information on the site in the "meta tag" part of a web page. Anything a nonprofit's web site offers the public (beyond the simple

promotion of the organization) needs to create search engine hits. If the site contains a recreation guide for a particular watershed, then the site should be found when someone enters the name of any stream in the watershed, or when an activity such as fishing or canoeing is entered in conjunction with the name of a stream, county, public land unit, or town that is within the watershed.

an old fashioned phone number). A good web site to visit to see how your web site rates on things such as loading time, search engine recognition, and browser compatibility is [www.websitegarage.com](http://www.websitegarage.com). Of course the site must also provide obvious opportunities to join online. The ACA has found that offering a neat gift for joining online often encourages a visitor to take the plunge.

### Link with Other Web Sites

Partnerships with like-minded organizations can be useful in generating traffic to your site. However, just as big corporate web entrepreneurs are trying to hog web traffic, there are sure to be some big nonprofits trying to do the same. Never surrender your organization's unique content to another organization. The goal is to have people come to your site for its content, stay around long enough to learn more about your organization, and then hopefully join. If a partnership does not help make that happen, then it is probably a bad idea.



**The key to making a website work is competing effectively with all the other spiders on the web.**

### In Summary

An organization can learn a lot from studying the successes and failures in the "dot com" world. Still, no matter how great or well promoted a nonprofit site is, it does not alleviate the need for the more traditional types of member solicitation. A web site can be a great promotional tool and an economical way to generate additional members, but the key to making it work is competing effectively with all the other spiders on the web who are also trying to snare the attention and money of potential members. ▲

*David Jenkins is the Director of Conservation and Public Policy at the American Canoe Association. He can be reached at (703) 451-0141, ext. 20, or [davej@acanet.org](mailto:davej@acanet.org).*

### Take Care of Basics

It also important to have a site that is visually interesting, loads quickly, is updated regularly with news or other timely content, and prominently displays contact information (including

**NEW DEADLINES!**

## Progressive Technology Project

The Progressive Technology Project (PTP) is pleased to announce its Fall 2000 grants pool. PTP plans on making 12-15 grants of up to \$10,000. The deadline for the latest round of grants is November 6th, 2000.

The Progressive Technology Project (PTP) seeks to strengthen citizen action, increase public participation by under-represented communities and build stronger grassroots organizations by supporting the effective use of information technology. PTP provides capacity building technical assistance and grant making to assist grassroots groups in the use of information technology to strengthen their social change efforts. PTP's grants pool is designed to support grassroots organizations that engage in multi-issue social, economic and environmental justice efforts to empower low-income people and communities of color.

For more information about PTP and the grant process please visit their web page at [www.progressivetech.org](http://www.progressivetech.org) ▲

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# Funding Membership Development

If your organization is seeking to become self-sustaining or less dependent on grants by building your membership base, you are probably aware that there is not a lot of funding available for this work. One of the best strategies is to go to local or regional funders who know you and are already invested in your work with a plan for accomplishing this goal. Funders usually recognize the need for this kind of organizational development, and while they may prefer to fund projects, they will sometimes make an exception for an organization they are already supporting. Be sure to lay out for them in a clear and logical manner how their grant will allow you to build a funding base that will make you less dependent on grants and provide you with the day-to-day operating funds that you require.

Another place to begin to look for potential funders for membership development programs is among the members of the new affinity group, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO). While not all the members of this organization fund environmental work, all are interested in helping nonprofits build their organization's effectiveness. GEO's web site is [www.geofunders.org](http://www.geofunders.org).

To supplement or complement these sources, here are a few regional and national funders who provide support for membership development and other kinds of capacity building:

## Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)

REI is a co-operative outdoor equipment company that is one of "The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America" (Fortune magazine, 1998 and 1999). Each year REI dedicates a portion of its operating budget to help protect and restore the natural outdoor environment, increase access to outdoor activities, and encourage involvement in muscle-powered sports across the country. The goal of all REI-supported projects is simple: protect the environment for outdoor recreation. To this end, REI offers grants for direct mail membership drives through monies dedicated for list purchases (REI or other lists) and other expenses such as direct mail consultants, printing, and postage. Applications for Conservation Grants are accepted March-October. For information on these grants contact the Grants Administrator through their web page: [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) (select "REI Gives Grants").

## Canaan Valley Institute

The Canaan Valley Institute (CVI) was created to foster local decision-making in support of sustainable communities in portions of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and all of West Virginia. The organization is committed to enhancing the ability of the residents of the region to improve their quality of life. CVI works to aid communities in implementing locally determined solutions to problems that threaten the economic or environmental resources of their watershed. The Institute focuses on local capacity building, information exchange, and implementation of solutions to problems that are negatively impacting natural and/or economic resources. The Institute provides technical assistance, organizational assistance, and funding to local stakeholders who are interested in improving the sustainability of their

watersheds. Grants average \$5,000. Many watershed groups have received funding in the past. The next grant deadline is November 13, 2000. Contact Tracy Coon at (800) 264-7042 or [canaanvi@aol.com](mailto:canaanvi@aol.com).



by Peter Raabe, River Network

## Wilburforce Foundation

Wilburforce Foundation is a private, philanthropic foundation that funds environmental issues in Alaska, the Yellowstone to Yukon region, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. The Foundation's goals are to protect the last remaining pristine places, preserve the diversity of native species by protecting local habitats (including critical wildlife connectors and flyways), leave a legacy of healthy organizations, and assure strong and lasting public support for wilderness preservation. The Foundation's Organizational Grants are designed specifically to assist organizations (working in the above mentioned areas) with short-term organizational development issues. These grants may be used for hiring consultants, facilitators, or trainers to assist with board retreats, the development of strategic or fundraising plans, or for other related training needs. The maximum grant size is \$7,500 and requires a one-to-three match. Organizational grant requests are considered within 45 days of receipt of a completed application form. Contact their Program Associate for more information at (206) 632-2325 or [grants@wilburforce.org](mailto:grants@wilburforce.org).

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## William C. Kenney Watershed Protection Foundation

William C. Kenney (Wick) was a passionate environmentalist and whitewater kayaker. Shortly before his death in 1994, Wick established the Kenney Foundation to carry out his vision of a West where rivers run free and clean from the headwaters to the sea. The Foundation funds locally based groups working to protect wild rivers in their community. Preference is given to groups who:

- work strategically and collaboratively with other groups;
- are pragmatic, innovative, and produce measurable results; and
- have operating budgets under \$750,000.

There are grants made for general support, technical assistance, capacity building, advocacy, and special projects. The Foundation looks favorably on organizations whose love of wild places and wild rivers inspires their work. For deadlines e-mail the foundation at [grants@kenneyfdn.org](mailto:grants@kenneyfdn.org) or visit the web site, [www.kenneyfdn.org](http://www.kenneyfdn.org).

## Environmental Support Center (ESC)

The ESC, in Washington D.C., has low-interest loans to help environmental nonprofits increase, diversify, and stabilize their sources of financial support. In particular, ESC will provide seed loans for membership development and direct mail campaigns, which often require a substantial upfront commitment of funds to pay for printing, postage and other direct costs. ESC loans range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Interest rates are less than 10%. The maximum repayment period is five years and is geared to the needs of the borrower. To be eligible, organizations must work on environmental issues, have their 501(c)(3) status, have been in existence at least

three years and have at least one full-time staff member.

For more information, call Pam Macedonia at (202) 966-9834.

## River Network- Partner Grants

River network provides all of its partners the opportunity to apply for Partner Grants. These grants can be used to develop membership through direct mail and other techniques. The grants are very competitive even within the restricted applicant pool. They range in size from \$500 to \$3,000. There are two deadlines annually, one in the winter and the other in mid summer. In order to be eligible for these grants groups must:

- have their 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax status,
- have a clear mission focused on river protection,
- have an active board of directors,
- be a River Network Partner, and
- have a budget under \$300,000.

For more information contact Robin Chanay, (202) 364-2550 or [rchanay@rivernetwork.org](mailto:rchanay@rivernetwork.org).

## National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) - National Wildlife Refuge Support

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats on which they depend.

The Foundation meets these goals by awarding challenge grants through which public - private partnerships are created and investments in conservation activities are increased. The Foundation leverages additional resources by requiring that each dollar it awards be matched with at least one third-party dollar. Eligible applicants include "Friends" groups, Cooperative and

Interpretive Associations, Audubon Chapters, and other nonprofit citizen support groups interested in assisting a refuge or group of refuges and the refuge system as a whole. This program offers several options for funding membership programs. Start-Up Grants assist starting refuge support groups with membership drives, training, brochures, etc. and are generally \$1,500 or less. Capacity Building grants strengthen the effectiveness of existing groups by funding strategic planning, outreach, and board development. Deadlines for these grants are March 31 and August 31.

For more information contact Trevor Needham at (202) 857-0166 or [needham@nfwf.org](mailto:needham@nfwf.org). ▲

## RIVER FUNDRAISING ALERT

The "River Fundraising Alert" is one of the services available to River Network Partners. Other publications and services include "Funding Sources for Grassroots River and Watershed Conservation Groups," how-to references, sample materials, and individualized assistance. River Network is dedicated to building the capacity of river and watershed organizations to support themselves financially.

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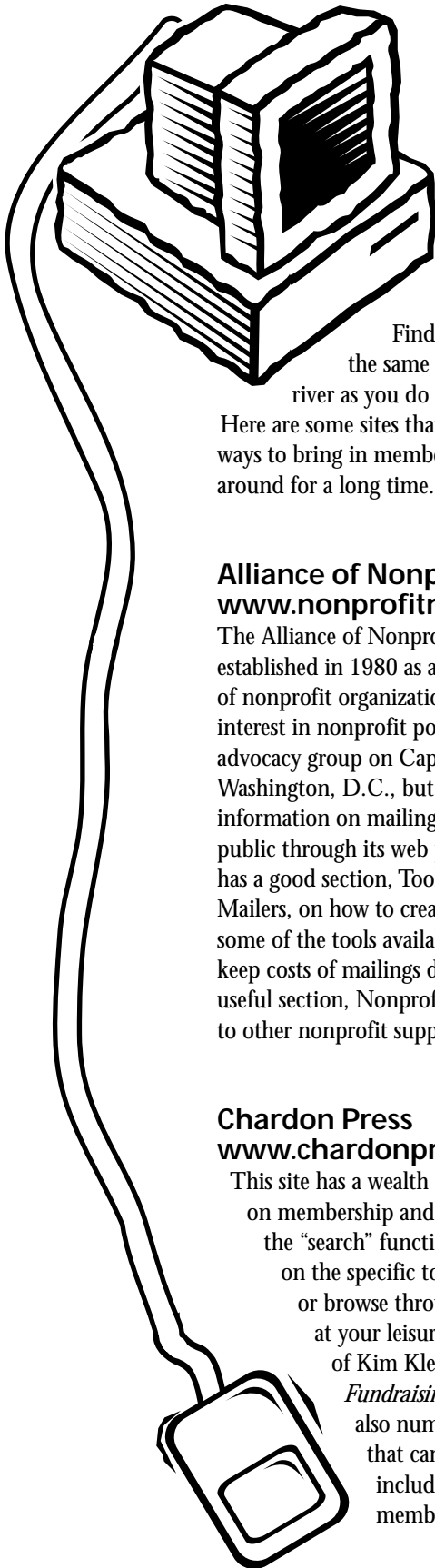
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# Membership Development

*Learn about fundraising online!*

by Peter Raabe and Pat Munoz



Finding people who have the same passion for your river as you do can be difficult.

Here are some sites that have pointers on ways to bring in members and keep them around for a long time.

## **Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers** [www.nonprofitmailers.org/](http://www.nonprofitmailers.org/)

The Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers was established in 1980 as a national coalition of nonprofit organizations sharing a vested interest in nonprofit postal policy. It is an advocacy group on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., but also offers information on mailings to the general public through its web page. This web page has a good section, Tools for Nonprofit Mailers, on how to create a mailing and some of the tools available to nonprofits to keep costs of mailings down. The other very useful section, Nonprofit Sharing, has links to other nonprofit support organizations.

## **Chardon Press** [www.chardonpress.com](http://www.chardonpress.com)

This site has a wealth of wonderful articles on membership and related topics. Use the "search" function to locate articles on the specific topic you are seeking or browse through the publications at your leisure, including issues of Kim Klein's *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. There are also numerous books listed that can be purchased, including some on membership development.

## **Mal Warwick and Associates** [www.malwarwick.com](http://www.malwarwick.com)

Mal Warwick and Associates is one of the oldest and best-known fundraising consulting firms in the business. This web site promotes the company, but also contains a wonderful collection of how-to articles on direct mail and other aspects of membership development. Click on "search" and type in key words to find information on, for example, "lists", or "renewals". Click on "publications" and delve into some of the sample chapters offered. Finally, the section entitled "All about Direct Mail" is full of useful and enlightening information on many aspects of membership development.

*Check out these great websites before you put final approval on your strategy.*

## **River Network** [www.rivernetwork.org/fundrais.htm](http://www.rivernetwork.org/fundrais.htm)

This is our own collection of fundraising articles. At this location is a series of three articles on direct mail and one on renewals which should be helpful in membership development and expansion. There are also articles on special events, major donors and other related topics.



## **Resources for Nonprofits** [www.helping.org/nonprofits](http://www.helping.org/nonprofits)

This useful site is a collaboration between AOL and the Benton Foundation. It is particularly helpful for tips on recruiting new members online. Click on their "FEATURE, Online Fundraising: who, when, where, what gives?" and browse through the questions and answers that seem pertinent to your needs. You can also click on "Fundraising Online" under the heading "Getting the help you need" for access to numerous fascinating articles relating to online membership recruitment. ▲

# Selected Fundraising Trainings for Fall 2000

by Peter Raabe

**The Foundation Center**, 79 Fifth Avenue, 16th Street New York, NY 10003-3076; Phone: (212) 620-4230 or (800) 424-9836; Fax: (212) 807-3677; <http://fdncenter.org>  
*Proposal Writing*

Full-day seminars offer the novice fundraiser and the nonprofit executive a nuts-and-bolts presentation on the proposal writing skills needed to secure grants from foundations and corporate sources.

**Washington, D.C.:** Dec. 13; **Philadelphia:** Oct. 12  
**Los Angeles:** Oct. 17; **New York City:** Oct. 18, Nov. 1, Nov. 16, Dec. 1, Dec. 14  
**Cleveland:** Oct. 25; **Atlanta:** Nov. 3  
**Dallas:** Nov. 14; **San Francisco:** Dec. 1  
**Fee:** \$195 for first member-\$165 for each additional.

*Grantseeking on the Web*

**New York:** Oct. 26, Nov. 17, Dec. 15; **Atlanta:** Oct. 18  
**San Francisco:** Oct. 27, Nov. 30; **Fee:** \$195.

**Learning Institute for Nonprofit Institutions**, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1 Madison, WI 53719-1141  
Phone: (608) 274-2192 or (800) 214-8326  
Fax: (608) 274-9978, [linst@danenet.wicp.org](mailto:linst@danenet.wicp.org)  
The Learning Institute offers numerous classes via live satellite. To see the latest offerings, check their web site, [www.uwex.edu/li/](http://www.uwex.edu/li/).

*Resource Development-Involvement and Investment-* Oct. 19, 2000. This course covers techniques for acquiring new donors to broaden your base of support, examining strategies for renewing donor support, and learning methods for upgrading donor support.

**The Center on Philanthropy**, 550 W. North St., Suite 301 Indianapolis, IN 46202-3272; Phone: (317) 274-4200  
FAX: (317) 684-8900

*Fund Raising for Small Nonprofits, Course 100.* This workshop will give the small staffed nonprofit the information and resources it needs to meet its goals.

**Indianapolis:** Oct. 11-13; **Tuition:** \$325

*Principles & Techniques of Fund Raising, Course 101.* This course provides groups with the framework for operating a successful development program.

**Indianapolis:** Nov. 13-17; **San Francisco:** Nov. 6-10  
**Boston:** Oct. 16-20; **Tuition:** \$765

*Building the Annual Fund, Course 107.* In this course, groups will learn how to create a broad, enduring base of supporters who will take their nonprofit to its annual funding goal.

**Indianapolis:** Oct. 25-27; **Tuition:** \$625

*Scholarship Opportunities at the Center on Philanthropy Dottie Rosso Scholarship Fund.* Partial scholarships are available to participants employed by 501(c)(3) organizations with annual budgets under \$300,000. Send a letter describing why the scholarship will be important to the organization. Include material documenting the organization's purpose and a budget or financial statement for the organization.

**Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training**, 3035 Vallejo Street, Suite 4 Denver, CO 80211, Phone (303) 455-6361  
[giftdenver@uswest.net](mailto:giftdenver@uswest.net)

*Fundraising Action Training (FAT).* This hands-on training includes discussions, strategy sessions and role-playing covering the principles of grassroots fundraising, creation of a realistic fundraising plan, the role of the board in fundraising, and fundraising techniques.

**Atlanta:** November 17-19  
**Fee:** \$200

**Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC)**, P.O. Box 1978 Vashon, WA 98070-1978, Phone (206) 463-7800, Fax (206) 463-7801, [trec@trecnw.org](mailto:trec@trecnw.org)  
TREC provides a series of affordable, high-quality training events designed to meet the needs of the environmental community in Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and the Yukon Territory.

*Intensive Membership Development Training and Consulting*  
**Seattle:** Oct.-June – an annual event... look for it in 2001.

There may be some funds available for scholarship and travel assistance, with priority based on need.

## Other Opportunities:

**Nov. 9:** Dallas, TX

"Managing a Small Development Office," workshop sponsored by the Center for Nonprofit Management (CNM), in Dallas, TX. Contact: CNM, 2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 826-3470, ext. 239; Fax (214) 821-3845; [atwood@cnmdallas.org](mailto:atwood@cnmdallas.org); [www.cnmdallas.org](http://www.cnmdallas.org)

**Dec. 12:** Boston, MA

"Individual Giving: Expanding the Donor-Revenue Pie," workshop sponsored by the Technical Development Corporation, in Boston, MA. Contact: TDC, 30 Federal Street, Boston, MA 02110; (617) 728-9151; Fax (617) 728-9138. ▲



**River Network**  
520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1130  
Portland, OR 97204

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## FUNDING DEADLINES

### Deadlines for October - December, 2000

Listed below are proposal deadlines for some funders with an interest in local river and watershed preservation efforts. Before submitting a proposal to any funder, be sure to obtain their guidelines and read them thoroughly and, if possible, discuss your project with a program officer.

<b>Funder</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Phone/Email</b>
Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)	National	March-Oct.	www.rei.com
Cricket Foundation	New England	October	(617) 570-1130
Environmental Support Center (Training)#	National	October 15	(202) 331-9700
Resist, Inc.	National	October 13	(617) 623-5110
McKnight Foundation*	AR, IA, IL, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, TN and WI	October 15	(612) 333-4220
Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust	New England	October 15	(617) 557-9775
Lazar Foundation	ID, western MT, OR, WA, and BC, Canada	October 15	(503) 225-0265
National Fish and Wildlife Found. (NFWF)*	National	October 15	www.nfwf.org
Environmental Support Center#	National	November 1	(202) 331-9700
Progressive Technology Project	National	November 6	(202) 387-9660
Tides Foundation*	Worldwide	November 7	(415) 561-6400
Canaan Valley Institute	Mid-Atlantic Highlands of MD PA, VA, and WV	November 13	(800) 264-7042
Appalachian Community Fund	WV and the Appalachian counties of east KY, east TN, and SE VA	November 15	(423) 523-5783
A Territory Resource (ATR)	ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY	November 27	(206) 624-4081
Bullitt Foundation	Rainforest region of southern AK, ID, western MT, OR, WA, and BC, Canada	December 1	(206) 343-0807
Frost Foundation	LA and NM	December 1	(505) 986-0208
Greenville Foundation	West of Rocky Mountains	December 1	(707) 938-9377
Homeland Foundation	Western USA	December 1	(949) 494-0365
Joyce Foundation	IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI and Canada	December 8	(312) 782-2464
Boston Foundation	New England	December 15	(617) 723-7415
Virginia Environmental Endowment	VA, and the Kanawha and Ohio River Valleys of KY and WV	December 15	(804) 644-5000
A Territory Resource (ATR)	ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY	December 29	(206) 624-4081

# ESC deadlines are the 1st of each month for group training, and the 15th for coalition building.

\*deadline for letter of inquiry, pre-application, or pre-proposal.