Making Conservation Happen:
Using Your Existing Resources to Have Your Voice Heard
Pretty Picture Intended to Reiterate That You Have This & Others Don’t
Agenda

- Engagement Strategies and Tactics
- The Mystic Aquarium Story: Campaign for the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument
- View From the Receiving End: Zoos and Aquariums Making a Difference
- Strategies to Help Zoos and Aquariums Activate their Audiences on Public Policy Issues
  - Messaging Findings from The Ocean Project/IMPACTS Research and Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program
  - Engagement Models
  - Audience Engagement Tips
  - Zoo and Aquarium Examples
  - Annual AZA Congressional Reception and Lobby Day
Engagement Strategies & Tactics

Tom Adams
Policy Advisor
The Ocean Project
Progressions in Engagement

ADVOCACY FUNNEL

Think of your advocacy strategy as a funnel. With a clear strategy, you can move both your high-value and low-value action takers to take more meaningful action.

- **Petition Sign-Up**
  - Low Value
  - It's easy to get a large number of supporters to sign petitions, but there is low commitment involved.

- **Patch Through Call**
  - Low Value
  - Easy action for the activist, but a low impact action by the target organization or legislator. This engagement is ubiquitous and easily forgettable.

- **Personal Tweet or Facebook post**
  - Medium Value
  - The value of this action can depend on the network of the poster. The more personal the post, the likelier it is that action will follow.

- **Lobby Day Visit**
  - High Value
  - Lobby day visits are memorable, because they require a committed organization or activist to prepare and plan for them.

- **Handwritten Letter to Legislator**
  - High Value
  - The personalized nature of a letter allows an organization or legislator to connect with your issue or cause, so that they are more likely to act in response to your targeted ask.

- **In-Person Meeting with Legislator**
  - High Value
  - Personal engagement is valuable for both the short- and long-term. The target organization or legislator is more likely to respond to your ask if they can put a face to a name or cause, which creates an ally you can call on in the future.
Resources

- Guests who view you as a trusted source of information
- Staff, volunteers, Trustees, donors and vendors
- Programs – shows, demonstrations, keeper chats, lectures and fundraising events
- Public relations – social, free and earned media
- Other facilities – entrance/exit, theaters, food services, grounds
- “Evaluation culture” allows you to measure the effectiveness of your message and response rate to a specific ask
The Mystic Aquarium Story:
Campaign for the Northeast Canyons & Seamounts National Marine Monument

Katie Cubina
Senior Vice President
Mission Programs
Getting there…
Public Policy

Forum: A monumental opportunity for the Atlantic Ocean

By Stephen M. Cozen

The dynamic ocean environment of the canyons and seamounts attracts other ocean wildlife, including whales, sea turtles, sharks, tuna, and sea birds. A number of these species are iconic to the region. Long valued by local Native American tribes, today these species are among those that support New England’s vibrant whale watching, recreational fishing, and seaweed farming industries.
Getting there…
Public Education & Outreach
THANK YOU,
PRESIDENT OBAMA

FOR PROTECTING MORE OCEAN THAN ANY PRESIDENT IN U.S. HISTORY

Your bold actions to create the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument and expand the existing Papahānaumokuākea and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monuments will help assure resiliency to climate change and the health of ocean ecosystems globally. Your ocean legacy will protect valuable marine wildlife as well as native cultures in over 850,000 square miles of our ocean. Future generations will benefit from your vision and historic action to protect the planet.
Mystic Aquarium’s Role Post Designation

• Scientific Expertise -- inform Management Plan
• Research and Exploration: Scientific Expeditions to the Monument
• Exhibit development at Mystic Aquarium
• Education and Outreach to formal and informal educational audiences
• Convener on public policy issues related to ocean protection and New England fisheries
Our Blue Park Exhibit

Our Blue Park

A NEW EXHIBIT AT

MYSTIC AQUARIUM

Our Blue Park Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

Deeper than the Grand Canyon! Our Blue Park
View From the Receiving End:

Zoos and Aquariums Making a Difference

Mark Antoniewicz
Director of Communications
Hip Hop Caucus

Formerly Served on President Obama’s Public Engagement Team for Environmental Issues
Zoos & Aquariums: New and Dynamic Voice

- National groups had not adequately developed grassroots support for Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument.
- While number of opponents were not large, they were organized and vocal.
- Mystic’s ability and willingness to explain the science and significance of the resource provided an “independent” intellectual counterbalance to opposition.
- It also gave decision-makers and the public a neutral and trusted source of information they could use to justify support.
- Nailed down the Connecticut delegation and help neutralize Rhode Island delegation.
Impact of 2016 Engagement Campaign

- Told us there was broad public support – Mystic, “vote” for MPAs campaign at 8 SEA LIFE Centers, other zoos, aquariums, museums

- Along with other groups, resulted in a wave of positive local media coverage that showed more support for marine monument

- Brian Deese (President Obama’s Climate Czar) visited Mystic. Saw the engagement effort and told us all about it

- We couldn’t have done it “without those meddling kids!” – Sea Youth Rise Up delegation
Breaking the Silence: Engagement to Increase Participation

- Diversifying the call for action with a unique and trusted voice for

- Moving hearts and minds with stories and familiarity

- “Either you shape the policy or let the policy shape you”
Strategies to Help Zoos & Aquariums Activate their Audiences on Public Policy Issues

Tom Adams
Policy Advisor
The Ocean Project
Innovative Solutions Grants+ Program

2014
- New England Aquarium
- North Carolina Aquariums
- Oregon Coast Aquarium

2015
- Florida Aquarium
- Philadelphia Zoo
- Riverbanks Zoo and Garden
- Woodland Park Zoo

2016
- Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
- National Aquarium
- St. Louis Zoo
- Woodland Park Zoo (Extension)
Aquarium and zoo visits, as well as newsworthy events, can activate an underlying concern for the ocean and its animals.

**When visiting, people expect, trust and appreciate information about ocean conservation.**

People are much more interested in how to be part of the solutions, much less in the problems.

People are much more inspired by emotional stories about animals and places, much less by facts and figures about "the ocean."

Youth (13-25) tend to be most interested and most willing, with potential to influence others.

"Walking the talk” resonates with audiences, especially when positioned as “together we can.”

There is an opportunity to integrate Internet and social media into visitor experiences.
“Basic Cable”
Advocacy and Engagement Model

- In person presentation in high visitor locations that include quality visual information (movie, poster, etc.)
- Tabling in designated area to capture guests and “make an ask” immediately after they leave a presentation
- To reinforce the information and tell the story again, conduct a short survey (5 questions max) asking guests if they saw the presentation, did they respond to the ask, etc.

Webinar Tease! In June webinar we will release the findings of three pilot projects that used a similar approach on fisheries management
A La Carte Expansion of Basic Advocacy Engagement Model

*In addition to “Basic Cable” model:*

- Use your animals to deliver message on your social media channels – every “silent movie” posted is a missed opportunity
- Education and community outreach staff incorporates message points into their presentations as much as practical
- Use your newsletter, magazine, and other in-house communications
- Media events using exhibit as backdrop to highlight an issue impacting that species
- Use membership appeals as a message delivery tool as another reason to “join your team”
- If applicable, highlight operational and infrastructure improvements you’ve made that help address the issue on which you are engaging. (e.g., rain barrels & water conservation)
A La Carte Expansion of Basic Advocacy Engagement Model (continued)

- Turn staff and volunteers into advocates
- Use lecture series and award ceremonies to focus on a specific issue
- Invite/cultivate elected officials and staff for tours/visits:
  - *Tours for them and/or staff* and try to get them there during your high season so they “see their voters”
  - *To distinguish you from other voices engaging on the issue, provide them with the economic impact stats and information about the challenge of your unique business*
  - *Turn it into a media event by giving them an award...even if it’s a “single use” honor*
- Be present while absent by providing “wall art” (branded photo of elected official’s animal encounter, poster, etc.)
- Build relationships with politicians in their formative years
- Utilize staff, Trustees and other supporters’ relationships with public officials
The Target is Likely Smaller than you Think

- **Zoos and aquariums have a head start** – people come to you, they trust you, and 75% of your guests want you to tell them what they can do to make a difference.

- **Common mistake is that too many people are targeted** – be disciplined in planning scope of engagement effort.

- **Engage visitors in high traffic areas** – use focused educational messages with “an ask”
Sometimes a Small Crowd Makes a Big Difference

- Congressional offices draft specific language to answer constituents after 15-25 contacts within a week or about a dozen phone calls a day for several days.

- Heartfelt individual letters force tailored responses and sometimes a review by senior staff – they are gold.

- A small number of the right people (Trustee, major donors, other friends, staff, volunteers, etc.) with the right message can get the attention of officials who ask themselves, “What if this catches on?”

- Small, creative actions can get attention.
Small Acts Can Have Big Impacts

Thank you Mr. President for protecting our ocean for future generations.
Thanks President Obama... for Protecting our Atlantic Ocean!

Designating the **Northeast Canyons and Seamounts** as our nation's first **Marine National Monument** in the **Atlantic Ocean** protects vital biodiversity - including endangered marine mammals and fragile deep sea corals, builds climate resiliency, and ensures that future generations may forever cherish America's ocean treasures.
People More Likely to Act When They’re in a Comfortable Place

- You are a “safe space” where people let their guard down
- Safety in numbers... engaging in the right location creates “rubber neck interest”
- Happy kids = relaxed and receptive parents

Pro tip: Be sensitive and aware so you don’t intrude or impose on your guests
South Carolina Aquarium: Education + Action = Results

I went strawless with the South Carolina Aquarium.

I am bringing a bag for sea turtles.
Cincinnati Zoo: Leading by Example

CINCINNATI ZOO takes steps to REDUCE WATER USE
#GreenestZooInAmerica

Water usage reduction efforts began in 2006, which have added up to BIG savings.

HOW did we do it?

- Replaced Pavement with GREEN SPACE
- Installed GREEN ROOFS
- Planted RAIN GARDENS
- Changed Everyday BEHAVIORS
- Fixed LEAKS
- Added PERVIOUS PAVERS
- Installed RAIN BARRELS
- Installed LOW-FLOW TOILETS
- Buried STORM WATER SYSTEMS Beneath the Zoo

All of these efforts have added up to 1 BILLION Gallons of Water Saved!
Cincinnati Zoo: Renewable Energy as an Exhibit

- Reverse “broken window messaging”
- Large scale solar capacity onsite in highly visible location
- Communicate significant savings on energy
- Cool cars on hot summer days
AZA Lobby Day Handout: On Point and on Message

- Identifies the problem
- Says we are here to play a constructive role
- Highlights ESA’s success
- Promotes the prominent role AZA members have played
- States that AZA is in this for the long haul
- Clearly states position
Annual AZA Congressional Reception and Lobby Day

- Takes place every year in May *(May 15 and 16, 2018)*
- Reception one of the most heavily attended – using program animals to tell stories to Members of Congress and staff
- Opportunity to *cultivate and maintain relationships and champions*
- Travelling to DC sends signal of *institutional commitment*
- Allows zoo and aquarium priorities to be widely disseminated by *real people...not lobbyist*
- Staff notices who is walking the hallways
- Great networking and professional development opportunity
Summary of AZA Fly-In Agenda

- **Multi-Species Conservation Fund; Reauthorization**
  Renew program that funds important conservation programs specifically for elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, great apes, and marine turtles

- **Institute for Museum and Library Science (IMLS); Appropriation**
  Requesting **$38.6 million for FY 2019** (10/1/2018 – 9/30/2019) for grant program that has previously funded zoo and aquarium programs

- **NOAA Environmental Education; Appropriation**
  Support FY 2019 funding levels of **$8 million for Environmental Literacy Grants** and **$12 million for Bay-Watershed Education Training Program (B-WET)**. Zoos and aquariums are eligible for grants

- **Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Program (NOAA/NMFS); Appropriation**
  Support $4 million in funding for grants and cooperative agreements marine stranding network members – including many AZA members

- **Endangered Species Act (ESA); Reauthorization**
  No pending legislation at this time but efforts to repeal and rollback the ESA are expected – AZA is expressing support for ESA and opposition to proposals that would weaken its provisions
Parting Thought: Think Before You Speak

- The Office of National Drug Control Policy (Drug Czar) once launched a campaign with the message:

  "Teenagers who smoke marijuana are more likely to be sexually active"
Additional Resources

- **The Ocean Project**
  - Stay up-to-date on our programs, future webinars, pilot projects, and World Oceans Day

- **Mystic Aquarium**
  - Learn more about the research, advocacy and exhibits that led to the creation of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument

- **Hip Hop Caucus**
  - More information on the engagement efforts of the Hip Hop Caucus, especially their climate change campaign

- **Cincinnati Zoo Go-Green Initiative**
  - *Link to the Go-Green page, but we encourage you to take a few minutes to explore the rest of the Conservation section because of the quality of how they communicate the issues.*

- **Spitfire Strategies**
  - A women-owned communications and advocacy firm that specializes in the needs of non-profit clients has a number of free advocacy/communications planning guides. Here are two we recommend:
    - **Discover Your Activation Point** – to help you decide where to start and how best to achieve your desired results
    - **Smart Plan** – Before you decide to engage your resources on an issue, especially one with local implications, use this planning guide to help assess how best to position yourself for success and anticipate and plan for the potential backlash that could result from you taking a stand
Thank you!

If you have any follow up questions or need information or advice on possible engagement activities, please contact Tom Adams at tadams@theoceanproject.org

Please look for follow-up materials that will include a more detailed deck of PowerPoint slides containing additional information and answers to all questions asked – including those we are not able to answer today due to time constraints.

Contact us if you are interested in an on-site advocacy and engagement training sessions for your organization.