



CONFLUENCE OF STATES EDUCATION SERIES SUMMARY

HARNESSING THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

OCTOBER 12, 2023

Hosted by:



Overview

Wesley Robinson from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Chez Chesak of the Outdoors Writers Association of America joined Nathan Reigner to discuss how to harness the media landscape. Nathan and Wesley shared how Pennsylvania worked strategically to gain prominence across the state's media landscape with a diverse array of stories related to outdoor recreation, as well as shared best practices and principles for working with media to tell great stories. Chez presented on the state media landscape and approach to storytelling.

Take-Home Advice

"Be genuine and let the work lead your efforts. Try to make meaningful connections and let the work do the talking. Reporters are not stupid and they know when you are selling them something that might not have any importance. If you can make the connection and understand what makes that reporter tick and what they like to cover, that goes a long way." - Wesley Robinson

"Who's. The. Audience?" In asking yourself that, know there is something in this for every audience. I'm sure we could find a way to talk to dentists about the importance of outdoor recreation. We found great value in not just pushing messages outward but doing a lot of listening. Being onsite with people, convening stakeholders, and fielding every request that comes in even if they have criticism. By hearing the criticisms, we are able to incorporate that into our messaging, adapt, and reflect it outward better." - Nathan Reigner

"Sit down with [members of the media] as much as possible, get to know them, and develop that relationship. Once you build that relationship, you might get to the point where they are coming to you with story ideas or ideas to have you quoted in something knowing now that you are a subject matter expert, someone they can trust, someone who will get back to them, and someone who has information really relevant to what they need." - Chez Chesak

"From a media standpoint, reporters like anecdotal stories to lead off with. If you can point to a coffee bike shop just outside of Philadelphia that hundreds of people visit on a Saturday and say this is helping grow outdoor recreation in a couple of different ways. That's the sort of thing that will not only get you headlines, but people will go to you when they are looking to do a story. **It becomes a two-way relationship."** - Wesley Robinson

"Don't be afraid to ask--how should I pitch you?" Some editors say send a bullet point list, some want one topic per email. Wednesdays are the best day to pitch when you're sending an email."- Chez Chesak

"There are several lenses through which we can look at the benefits of outdoor recreation. One might look through an economic lens, spiritual lens, environmental lens, connection to wildlife, or community. Part of our role as leaders is to figure out that lens that is most resonant with a particular audience.- Chris Perkins

There is an important role for my position to set the stage and to give a general direction to the conversation we're having in the Commonwealth. But then if a community health foundation takes that message and puts their own spin on it, and if an economic developer takes that message and puts their own spin on it, and if an entrepreneur shares those messages and we're all talking to our state legislators, county commissioners, and our department of economic department. **If they are hearing the same messages but from different angles,** that is where we realize a lot of power and have impact of triangulation." - Nathan Reigner

Panel Speakers



Nathan Reigner

Director of the Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation



Wesley Robinson

Press Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Chez Chesak

Executive Director of the Outdoor Writers Association of America



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