

One Size Does Not Fit All (or Even Most) – Lessons Learned in Effective Communication

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We all have experience with successful and less successful communication in our personal lives; communication on projects is no different. When a project includes aquatic environments, channel restoration or relocation, additional challenges in communication are presented. Perhaps this is due to additional stakeholders, emotional connections, and/or additional pressures on completing project objectives.

We will discuss lessons learned regarding the importance of establishing and maintaining a consistent communication plan through a project, particularly on quickly evolving projects. These will be explored using recent emergency response project examples including short-term projects with limited agency stakeholders, and multi-year projects with extensive agency and public stakeholders. Experience in preparing and distributing informational and technical materials for a variety of audiences reinforces that a ‘one-size fits all’ approach to communication often will not lead to project success. Clear communication of project objectives, use of multiple media, and a consistent communication plan each prove useful tools for effective communication.

Biography

Laura is a Certified Ecologist with the Ecological Society of America and GHD’s Natural Resources Service Line Lead in North America. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Earth Sciences and Biology from Dalhousie University, and Master’s degree in Paleolimnology from Queen’s University, in Canada. Laura’s 15 years of environmental consulting experience includes management and coordination of both public and private sector clients at all project stages from study design and data collection, through assessment, reporting, and stakeholder communication. Her expertise includes ecologically-focused restoration design, benthic macroinvertebrates community assessment, and inter-disciplinary project design.