Say It Loud!

Creating a Communications Plan for your special project using Sonoma Land Trust’s Sea Change as an example

Dave Koehler, Executive Director
Julian Meisler, Baylands Project Manager
Deirdre Holbrook, Co-Director of Development
Marian Vernon, Strategic Initiatives Analyst
Outline

I. Welcome and Introductions
II. Overview: Group Exercises and Smart Chart
III. Sea Change/Baylands Project Presentation
   1. Project Background
   2. Program Decisions
   3. Internal and External Context
   4. Strategic Choices and Target Audiences
   5. Communications Activities
   6. Measurements of Success
   7. Reality Check
IV. Session Conclusion
II. Overview: Group Exercises and Smart Chart

“Before we make any strategic communications grant, we recommend that the grantee complete Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart” – Packard Foundation website

“…an indispensable tool” – William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Smart Chart Approach

Six Step Plan

1. Program Decisions
2. Context
3. Strategic Choices
4. Communications Activities
5. Measurement
6. Reality Check

Created by Spitfire Strategies
http://www.smartchart.org/content/smart_chart_3_0.pdf
III. Sea Change: The Restoration of Sears Point
Step One: Program Decisions

1. Overall Goal
2. Project Objectives
3. Decision-Makers
4. Group Exercise
Project Background

Sonoma Baylands – the rural northern edge of San Francisco Bay
196,000 acres of marsh existed before 1850

180,000 acres of marsh lost in last 150 years

90% loss

Images from the Bay Institute
Tidal wetlands provide habitat for many species including commercially important ones.
Tidal wetlands filter runoff entering the bay.
Tidal wetlands sequester carbon at a greater rate than almost any other ecosystem on earth.
Tidal wetlands protect infrastructure from rising seas and storm surge
San Francisco Bay connects us to more than 7 million people
- National importance
- Funding available
Program Decisions: Overall Goal

Baylands Habitat Goals
Program Decisions: Overall Goal

Baylands Habitat Goals

Retain appropriate agriculture
Program Decisions: Overall Goal

Baylands Habitat Goals

Retain appropriate agriculture

Connect the public
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access

871 acres
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access

2,327 acres
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access

241 acres
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access
Program Decisions: Objectives

Implement Habitat Goals
- Buy land for restoration, agriculture, public access

Sears Point
- Restore 1,000+ acres tidal wetlands
- Restore seasonal wetlands
- Promote appropriate agriculture
- Provide public access
- Raise $25 million
Landowners:
Dickson Family
North Point Joint Venture

Early Funders:
Moore Foundation, State Coastal Conservancy,
Wildlife Conservation Board, Sonoma
Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Group Exercise: Program Decisions

Fill in your Smart Chart worksheet with your project’s Goal, Objectives, and Decision Makers.
Step Two: Context

1. External Scan
2. Internal Scan
The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, in partnership with Station Casinos of Las Vegas, plans a casino and hotel on nearly 2,000 acres at Highway 37 and Lakeville Highway.

Casino would devastate wetland-restoration goals
Program Decisions: Decision-Makers

Landowners:
Dickson Family
North Point Joint Venture

Early Funders:
Moore Foundation, State Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, Sonoma Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

Surprise Wild Card:
Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria
Context: External Scan

What were the external challenges and assets?

**Challenges**
- Casino threatens all work to date
- Farmland conversion
- Hunt club closure
- Local government did not want to get involved

**Assets**
- Working in context of larger Bay plan with broad buy-in
- Energized community who rallied against casino
Context: Internal Scan

What were Sonoma Land Trust’s Assets and Challenges?

Challenges
- Small staff
- No experience with capital campaigns
- No press relationships

Assets
- Hired experienced and well connected Exec Director
- Credibility with funders
- Strong board leadership
Context: Define your Position

- Use the strength of the Habitat Goals plan to make the land use an obvious choice

- Amplify the positive media around wetland restoration in the Bay

- Encourage the community to weigh in on what it wanted
Group Exercise: Context

Fill in your Smart Chart worksheet with your project’s internal and external scan.
Open Road with Doug McConnell

Sonoma Baylands Restoration Video
Step Three: Strategic Choices

1. Target Audiences
2. Readiness
3. Desired Action
4. Message
5. Messenger
Strategic Choices: Target Audience

1. Elected officials
2. Funders (public and private)
3. Landowners
4. Tribe
Strategic Choices: Readiness

Internal: Needed to scale up
- Communications
- Fundraising

External: Audience readiness
- Stage 1 (Sharing Knowledge)
- Stage 2 (Building Will)
- Stage 3 (Reinforcing Action)
Strategic Choices: Desired Action

1. Elected officials – support the preservation of the land and withdrawal of casino proposal.
2. Funders – Contribute funds to acquire the land.
3. Landowner – Joint Venture to sell the land to the land trust.
Strategic Choices: Message

1. Land trust is civic leader in county and expert in Baylands
2. Science and landscape
3. Vision of the Baylands
4. Historic opportunity
Strategic Choices: Messenger

1. Land Trust – senior staff, consultants, board
2. Community leaders, science community, and advocates
Success!

Casino donates $4 million purchase option and $75k toward acquisition
Group Exercise: Strategic Choices

Fill in your Smart Chart worksheet with your project’s target audience(s), readiness, desired action, message, and messenger.
ABC7 News Video

Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Going Strong
Step Four: Communications Activities

1. Tactics
2. Timeline
3. Assignments
4. Budget and Resources
Communications Activities: Tactics

Design “Sea Change” celebration to commemorate completion of the project
Communications Activities: Tactics
(Before Event)

- Engage press in the breach
- Ensure the event is designed to engage partners and others VIPs, along with the community
Communications Activities: Tactics (Before Event)

PRESS
- Develop and distribute press materials, including online press kit
- Hire photographer and videographer
- Design invitations and special communications
- Design program and engage notable speakers
Communications Activities: Tactics (Before Event)

PRESS
- Use ads, earned media and social media to reach public
- Send out media advisory
- Consider wire release
Communications Activities: Tactics
(Before Event)

FUNDERS, ELECTEDs, TRIBE, VIPs
- Emails, newsletter
- Send VIP event invitation to partners, elected officials and leadership supporters
- Create speaking program with partners
- Create takeaway piece to recognize support
Communications Activities: Tactics (During Event)

- Staff up. Volunteer and Board participation.
- ID and prep potential interviewees
- Talking points to staff, board and
- Live tweet, filming, photography
Communications Activities: Tactics (During Event)
Communications Activities: Tactics (During Event)
Communications Activities: Tactics (During Event)

1. Create activities to reinforce our role in restoration
2. Take home piece
Communications Activities: Tactics (During Event)

Live tweet with video

The tides are returning to these 1,000 acres for the first time in 140 years.
Communications Activities: Tactics (After Event)

PRESS
- Milk it! Update website and social media that night
- Create video and reprints
- Keep taking pictures and pushing them out

KEY AUDIENCES
- Send email to VIP event attendees, thanking them for their support and giving them special preview of video.
- Follow up events and visits to the site
Sometime between yesterday and this morning, the Sears Point restoration site filled in. Isn’t it beautiful?

108 shares

View previous comments

Katie Katie wonderful beyond words

Unlike Reply Message 2 November 2, 2015 at 4:11pm

Jeanette Oswald 🌼🌼🌼🌼🌼 yeah yeah

Unlike Reply Message 1 November 2, 2015 at 4:54pm

Linda Jacobs I love how quickly the birds knew to return

Unlike Reply Message 1 November 2, 2015 at 7:05pm

Bruce Poole Yes it’s beautiful but the marsh originally had lots of fresh water going thru it, this is just salt water from the bay and the only thing that can grow in that is pickerelweed which does not support
Communications Activities: Timeline, Assignments, Budget and Resources

Event production schedule – the key to producing an organization-wide event.
Group Exercise: Communications Activities

Fill in your Smart Chart worksheet with your project’s communications activities, including your tactics, timeline, assignments, budget and resources.
Step Five: Measurements of Success

1. Outputs
2. Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outputs

1. Membership, Leadership supporters, VIPs
2. Media coverage
Communications Results: Print Media
Communications Results: USA Today

CALIFORNIA Sonoma: A restoration project aims to make 1,000 acres of farmland a tidal marsh basin over the next 25 years, The Press Democrat reported. Supporters of the Sonoma Land Trust gathered to watch an excavator break through a Sears Point levee, allowing saltwater to flood over the reclaimed oat fields.

COLORADO Fort Collins: University of Colorado Health — the parent company of Poudre Valley Hospital — will open its new...
## Communications Results: Facebook

| Date          | Description                                    | Likes | On post | 15 | 27 | 67 | 6 | 99 | 79 | 402 | 6273 | 3941 | 2332 | $17.00 | $0.00729 |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|----|----|----|---|----|----|-----|-------|-------|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 10/8/2015     | Initial Facebook announcement                 | 189   | 120     | 15 | 27 | 67 | 6 | 99 | 79 | 402  | 6273  | 3941  | 2332 | $17.00 | $0.00729 |
| 10/16/2015    | Nine days until Sea Change (registration link) | 111   | 43      | 5  | 20 | 41 | 0 | 0  | 87 | 110  | 4332  | 3074  | 1258 | $11.47 | $0.00912 |
| 10/19/2015    | Less than a week with Sea Change with levee photo | 72    | 16      | 9  | 7  | 14 | 0 | 75 | 26 | 81   | 1867  | 501   | 1266 | $5.00  | $0.00395 |
| 10/21/2015    | Link to interview with KPIX-TV with photos     | 31    | 9       | 0  | 1  | 4  | 0 | 29 | 14 | 17   | 864   | 360   | 504  | $5.00  | $0.00992 |
| 10/23/2015    | Two days until Sea Change with Julian M&M post link | 50    | 8       | 8  | 2  | 2  | 2 | 0  | 14 | 23   | 875   | 446   | 429  | $5.00  | $0.001166|
| 10/23/2015    | PD preview of Sea Change link                  | 70    | 98      | 0  | 28 | 27 | 0 | 0  | 224 | 95   | 5197  | 4569  | 628  | $5.00  | $0.00796 |
| 10/23/2015    | Permanent link to KPIX-TV coverage             | 24    | 73      | 1  | 21 | 1  | 5 | 0  | 28  | 103  | 1758  | 1101  | 657  | $5.00  | $0.00761 |
| 10/24/2015    | Watch the sun set on the new tidal marsh       | 124   | 19      | 3  | 9  | 14 | 1 | 22 | 27 | 48   | 3032  | 647   | 2385 | $20.00 | $0.00839 |
| 10/24/2015    | Night before Sea Change                        | 5     | 0       | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0 | 0  | 4   | 6    | 315   | 315   | 0    | $0.00  | $0.00887 |
| 10/25/2015    | Sea Change day-of-announcement                 | 97    | 38      | 8  | 5  | 19 | 0 | 28 | 45 | 120  | 3391  | 2827  | 564  | $5.00  | $0.00552 |
| 10/25/2015    | Sea Change live stream link                    | 17    | 2       | 2  | 1  | 2  | 0 | 14 | 45 | 24   | 749   | 749   | 0    | $0.00  | $0.00522 |
| 10/25/2015    | Moment of Sea Change at noon w/ Channel 5 and 7 | 35    | 10      | 6  | 2  | 7  | 66 | 6  | 7   | 65   | 1628  | 670   | 958  | $5.00  | $0.00914 |
| 10/25/2015    | SF Chronicle photo link                        | 278   | 195     | 13 | 20 | 69 | 0 | 0  | 596 | 190  | 14136 | 2187  | 20.00 | $20.00 | $0.00592 |
| 10/25/2015    | Link to raw video footage of breach from KPIX | 188   | 148     | 8  | 11 | 42 | 0 | 0  | 663 | 210  | 11609 | 8228  | 3381 | $20.00 | $0.00868 |
| 10/25/2015    | Link to PD article                             | 285   | 414     | 6  | 26 | 81 | 0 | 0  | 786 | 345  | 16666 | 16090 | 576  | $5.00  | $0.00788 |
| 10/25/2015    | Link to tweet compilation by SF Bay Tide       | 117   | 12      | 4  | 2  | 3  | 6 | 0  | 136 | 38   | 4785  | 2247  | 2538 | $20.00 | $0.00919 |
| 10/25/2015    | Link to Marin JJ article                      | 61    | 7       | 0  | 2  | 2  | 0 | 0  | 36  | 12   | 1639  | 1095  | 544  | $4.00  | $0.00664 |
| 10/27/2015    | Link to Corby Youtube video                   | 466   | 316     | 48 | 80 | 145 | 0 | 531 | 527 | 26960 | 14014 | 12946 | $86   | $0.00528 |
| 10/29/2015    | Photo of filled-in breach site                | 1362  | 549     | 85 | 82 | 109 | 1 | 318 | 0   | 765  | 26365 | 17093 | 9272 | $49   | $0.054896765 |
Communications Results: Attendance

More than 300 people attended the morning

More than 700 people attended the public portion in the afternoon
Communications Results: Reprints
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Measurements of Success: Outcomes
Group Exercise: Measurements of Success

Fill in your Smart Chart worksheet with your project’s measurements of success, including outputs and outcomes.
Step Six: Reality Check
Expect the Unexpected …
IV. Session Conclusion