**7 Secrets the Government Does Not Want You to Know  
Advocacy 101**

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**Advocate:**

* To speak, plead, or argue in favor of
* One that argues for a cause or policy; a supporter or defender
* Is the process of putting forward one’s views to the public or decision maker(s)
* Is action to make positive change, not just criticism

**Examples of Advocacy:**

* Writing a letter to the editor.
* Calling or writing an elected official about the preserves.
* Posting a comment on a blog or web page in response to a post.
* Collecting petition signatures on a specific topic.
* Sharing information with your your neighborhood association/church/other group and asking them to take an action.
* Submitting your comments/ideas to the staff of the Forest Preserve District.
* Lobbying to pass legislation – A specific type of advocacy.

**The 7 Secrets….of Organizing**

1. Clear Issue Focus
2. Achievable Campaign Goals
3. Understanding the Lay of the Land
4. Strategy of How You Will Win
5. Compelling Campaign Communication
6. The Right Tactics and Clear Timelines
7. Resource Management

**2. Campaign Goals**

Conservation goals – short, interim, long term goals.

What will you deem a victory?

How will you quantify your success?

Organizational goals - What are your organizational goals? How will you recruit and develop new advocates?

Goals should be realistic, achievable and quantifiable.

* Restore 100 acres
* Build a new trail
* Recruit 20 new people
* Develop 2 new leaders
* Permit a new activity to begin
* 3-lanes and a bike path, not 5-lanes

**3. The Lay of the Land**

* **Organizational strengths and weaknesses**
  + Be honest and critical. What resources do you have and what do you need?
* **Allies and opponents** 
  + Who are they?
  + What are their strengths and weaknesses?
  + What resources can they bring to the effort?
  + What will they do or spend to oppose you?

**4. Strategy**

* **Strategic vehicle** - How will you win? In what venue do you hope to accomplish the goals?
* **Targets**
  + **Primary: Decision-makers** - Which individual or group of individuals has the power to deliver your conservation goal? Who will make the decision? Which specific individuals will you target to secure victory?
  + **Secondary -** Which prominent individuals in your community can help you influence your targeted decision-makers? Who can you enlist to help you influence their decision? How might their involvement impact this effort?
  + **Public**- Who among the general public are you attempting to reach with your message? Who are your most likely supporters in the community? Think in terms of geography, demography, and constituencies.

**5. Campaign Communication**

* + **Message/Slogan -** What is the central message you plan to deliver through this campaign? It should be a clear, concise, and compelling phrase (10 words or less). It summarizes your position.
  + **Story** - What is the story you will tell to communicate with your targets? Who is the villain? Who is the victim? Who are the heroes? What is the problem? What is your proposed solution?
  + **Media outlets** - List the specific media outlets you will use to get your message out

**The 7 ‘C’s of Campaign Communication**

1. ***Clear*** – simple, easy to understand
2. ***Concise***
3. ***Connected*** – relates directly to the local community, right here & right now
4. ***Compelling***– connects at the gut and intellectual levels, sense of urgency
5. ***Contrasting***– clear choice between two things
6. ***Credible*** – sounds true and is true
7. ***Consistent*** - repeated over and over.

**6. Tactics and Timelines**

* What actions (tactics) will your campaign take to put pressure on your target(s)?
  + Direct Contact Activities:
    - Phone banks
    - Door to Door
    - Neighborhood coffees, house parties
    - Leafleting
    - Written – newsletter, web posting
  + Visibility Activities
* What will you do to ensure the media covers your issue?
  + Pitch a specific story
  + Opinion columnists
  + Editorials
* In what order will you implement your tactics?
  + Start small and get bigger

**7. Resource Management**

* Campaign budget
* Donor management/fundraising
* Volunteer recruitment and stewardship
  + Asking - a good ask should have the following components:
    - Introduction - both who you are and ‘the story’
    - Problem
    - Solution
    - Opposition
    - Request
  + Knowing Who to Ask
  + Knowing What to Ask

Our Most Important Resource: People

* ***Ask*** – Know what you need – then ask for it.
* ***Thank***– Often and in different ways
* ***Inform*** – Take the time to talk with people. Explain how it all fits into a larger picture.
* ***Involve*** – Specific, concrete tasks. Match skills to tasks.

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