



Water Words That Work

Make a splash with your communications!

Short Version



Water Words That Work

Make a splash with your communications!

Short Version

How Many Are We?



Somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals

How Many Are They?

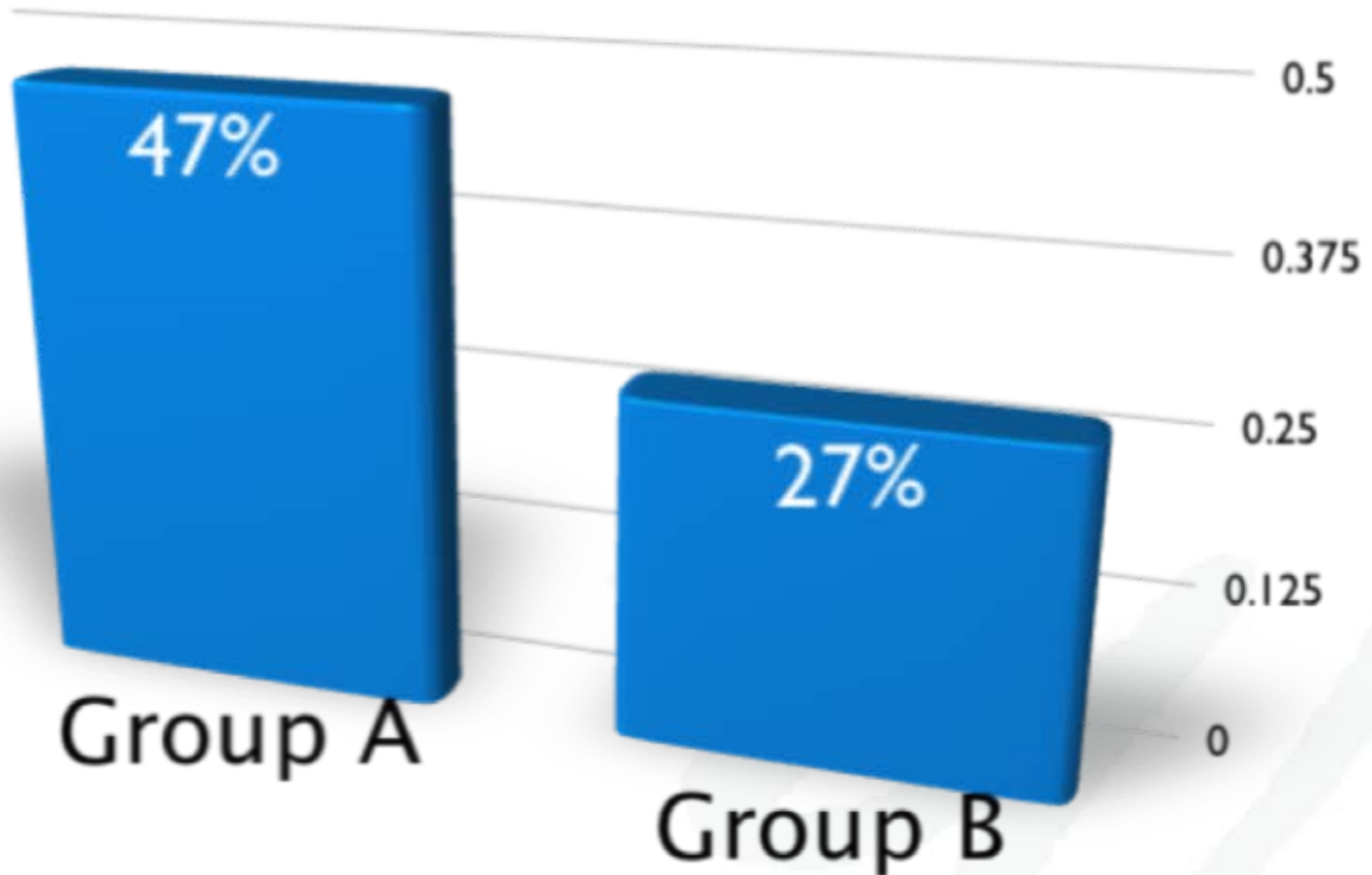


Approx 99.9% of Americans do *not* work for a conservation organization. They are *not* our peers.



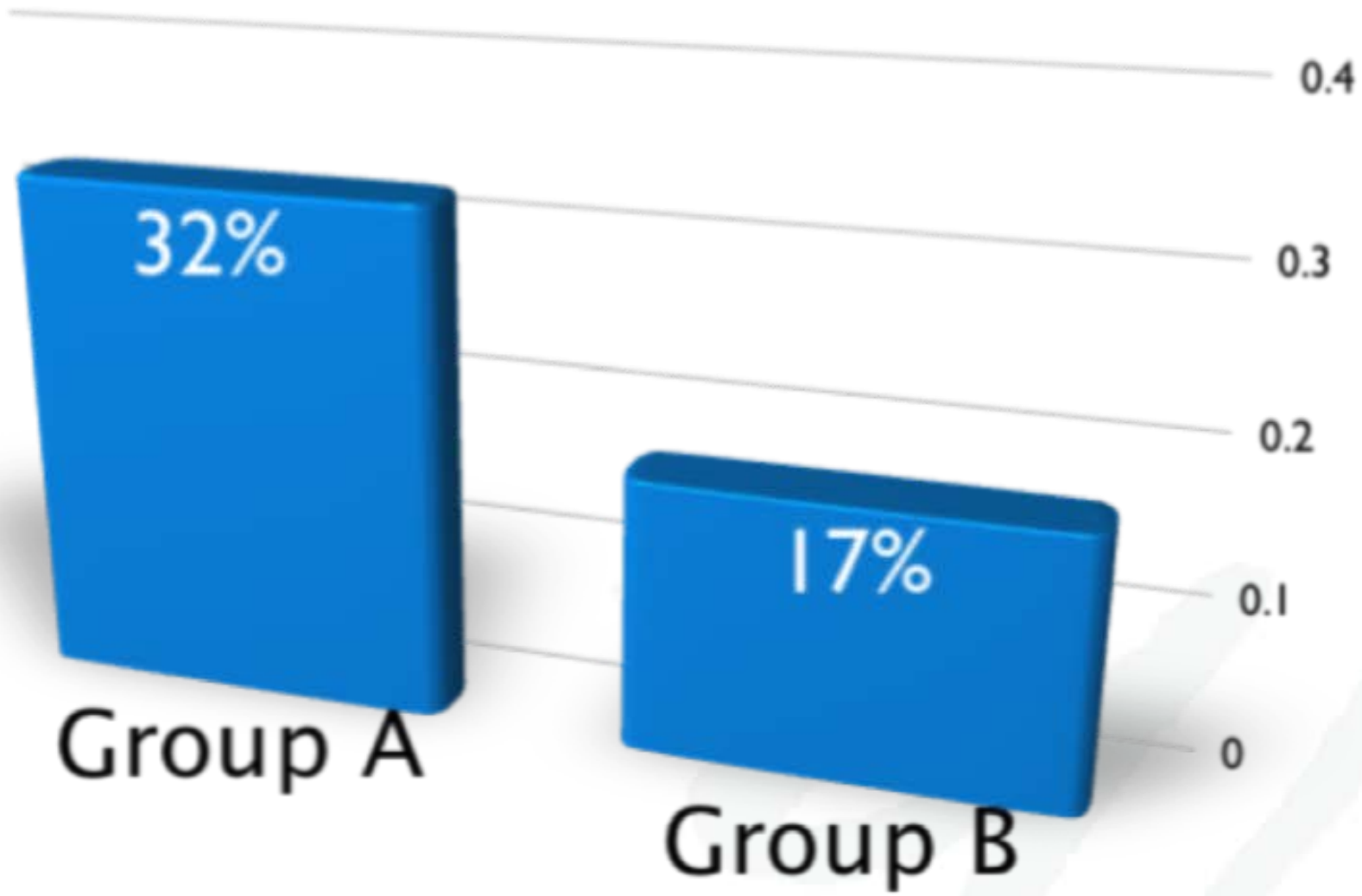
12,000 Participants!

What's the X Factor?



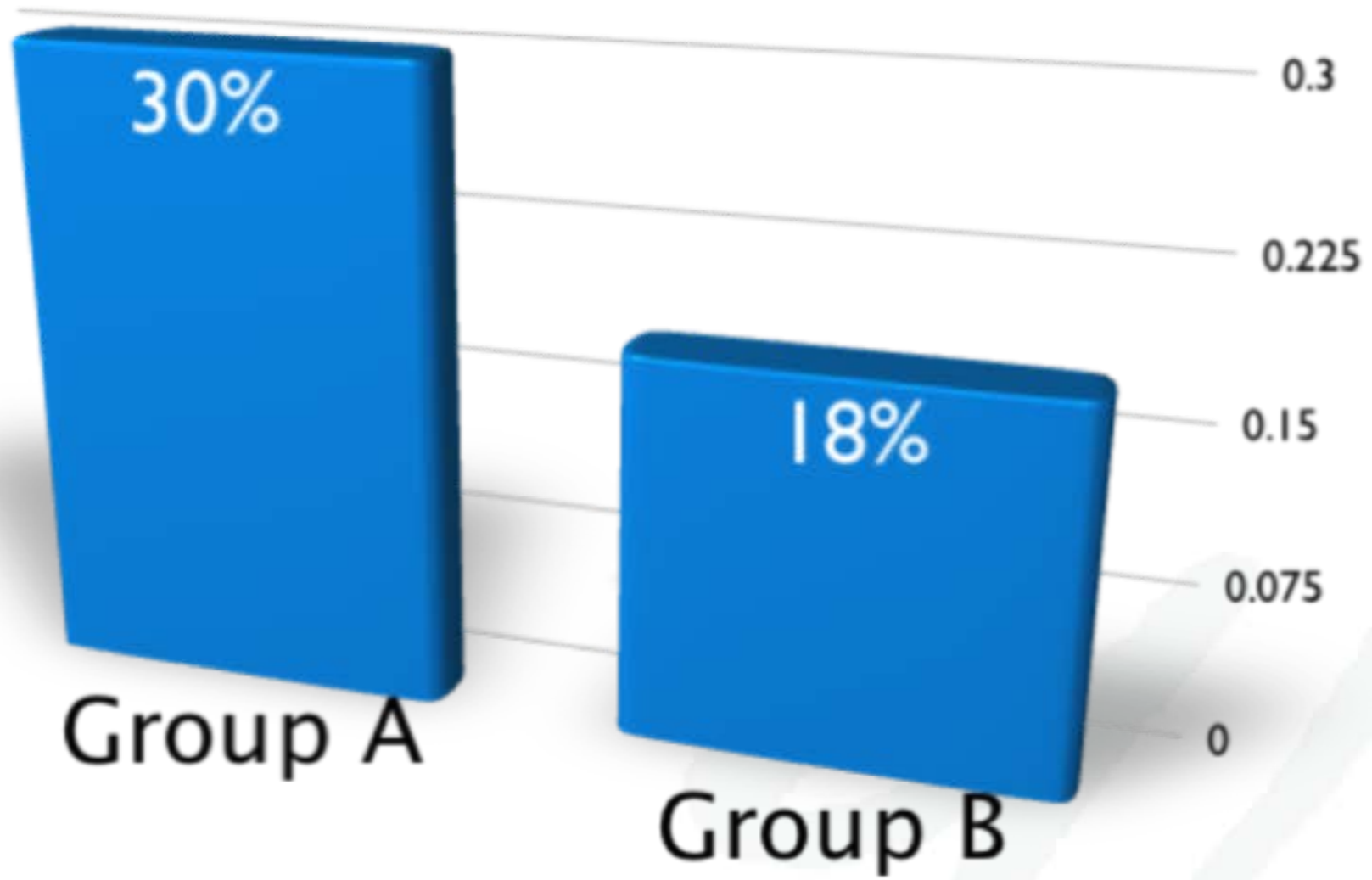
■ Reminded others to be environmentally conscious

What's the X Factor?



■ Voted for the candidate with the best environmental record

What's the X Factor?



■ Recently donated to environmental causes

Group B agrees with this statement:

“The actions of a single person like me
won't make any difference...”

If you can convince your audience that their actions **do make a difference** -- and that **others will do their part**, too -- then they are about *twice as likely* to adopt a pro-environmental behavior than otherwise

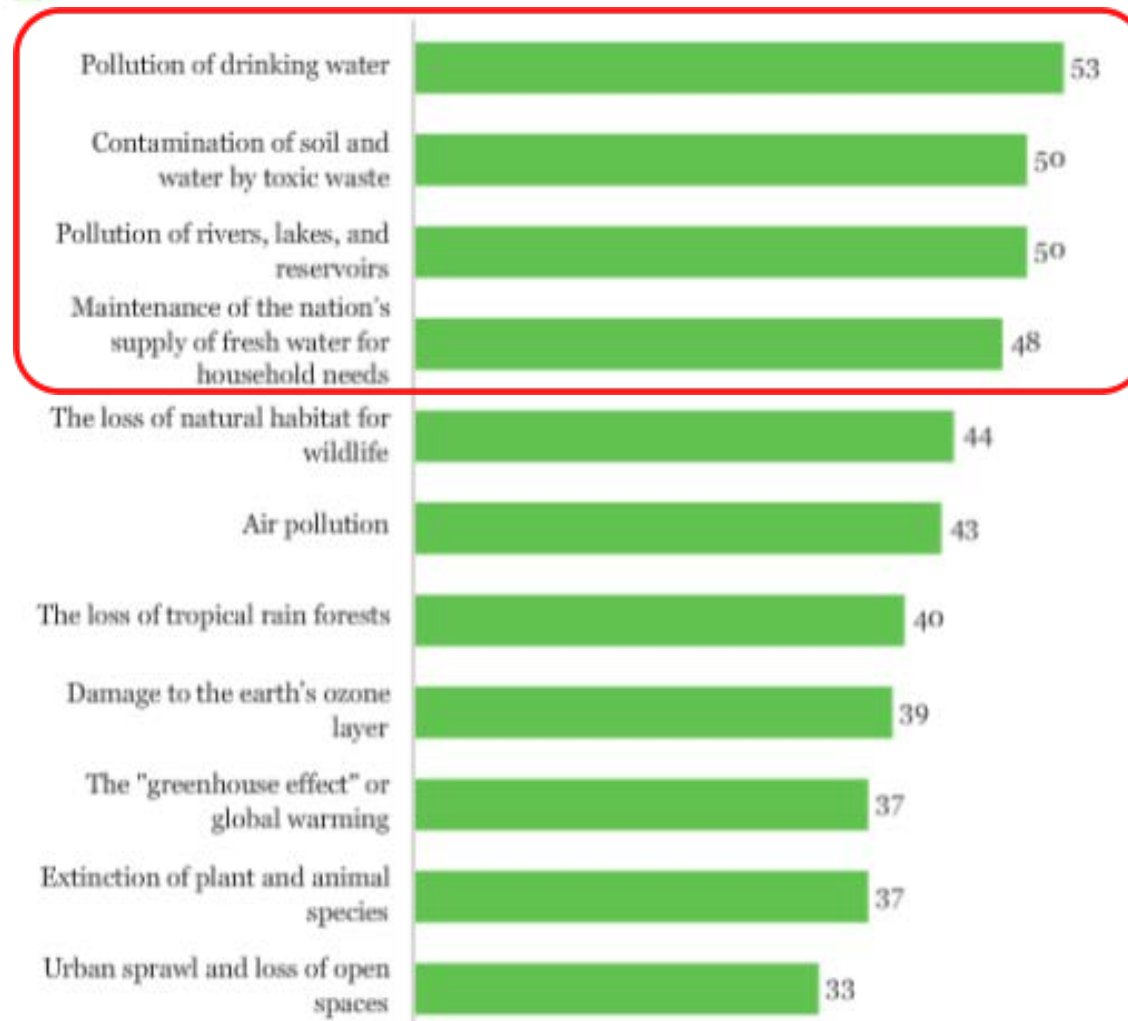
Agenda

- **Leadership and encouragement** produce more action for conservation than education, information, or "awareness."
- The public thinks clean water is the most important environmental issue.
- But **our poor communications** excludes most citizens, and saps their confidence in themselves
- You can use an **Environmental Message Method** to improve your communications -- inserting leadership and encouragement into your information.

Water is a High Priority

I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.

■ % Great deal



Water is a High Priority

Top Environmental Concern, 1989-2008 Gallup Polls

	Top concern	%
2008 Mar 6-9	Pollution of drinking water	61
2007 Mar 11-14	Pollution of drinking water	61
2006 Mar 13-16	Pollution of drinking water	61
2004 Mar 8-11	Pollution of drinking water	61
2003 Mar 3-5	Pollution of drinking water	61
2002 Mar 4-7	Pollution of drinking water	61
2001 Mar 5-7	Pollution of drinking water	61
2000 Apr 3-9	Pollution of drinking water	61
1999 Apr 13-14	Pollution of drinking water	61
1991 Apr 11-14	Pollution of drinking water / Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs	57
1990 Apr 5-8	Pollution of drinking water	57
1989 May 4-7	Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs	57

GALLUP POLL

**Our poor communications saps
citizens' confidence in
themselves, and this holds them
back**



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK



American Jobs Are Sailing Away . . .

Stop Reflagging!

Support YOUR U.S. Merchant Marine



MEBA



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK

Entering

**CHESAPEAKE BAY
WATERSHED**

Please Treasure the Chesapeake



What's A Watershed?



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line

What's A Watershed?

Final Report for

A SURVEY OF CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED RESIDENTS

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS
CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED WATER QUALITY ISSUES**


CMI-HDD-02-01
Submitted: September 11, 2002

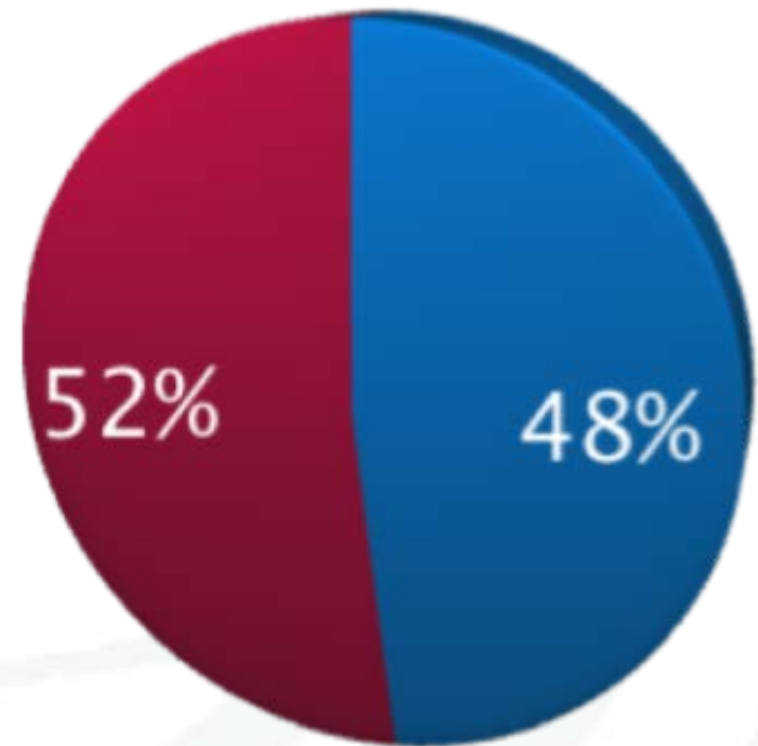
Prepared for the
Chesapeake Bay Program



.....

Prepared by:

Julie A. McClafferty
Human Dimensions Division
Conservation Management Institute
College of Natural Resources
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
203 W Roanoke Street
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0534
(540) 231-7348
<http://fwie.fw.vt.edu>



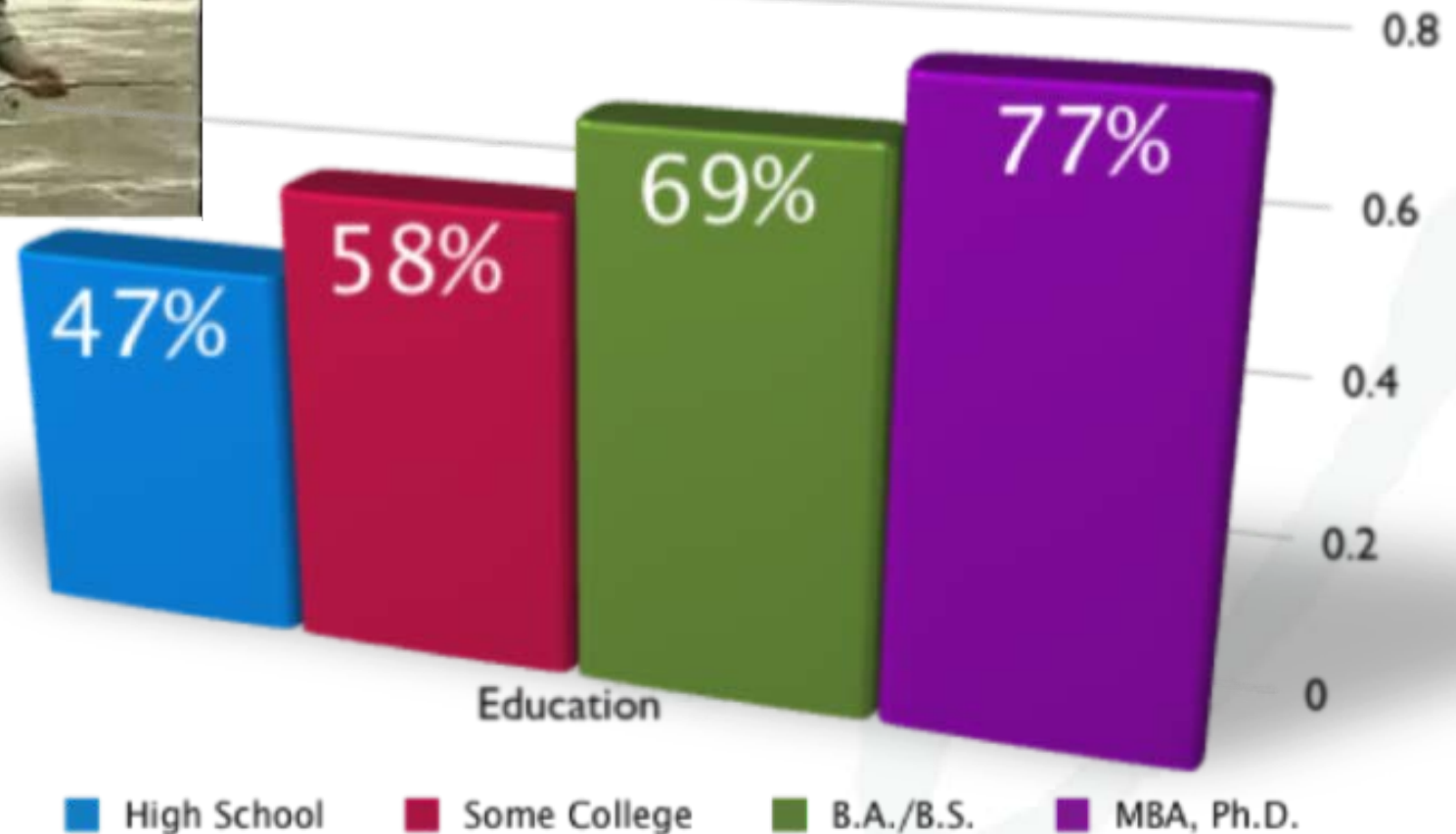


-  Guess Right
-  Guess Wrong

What's A Watershed?



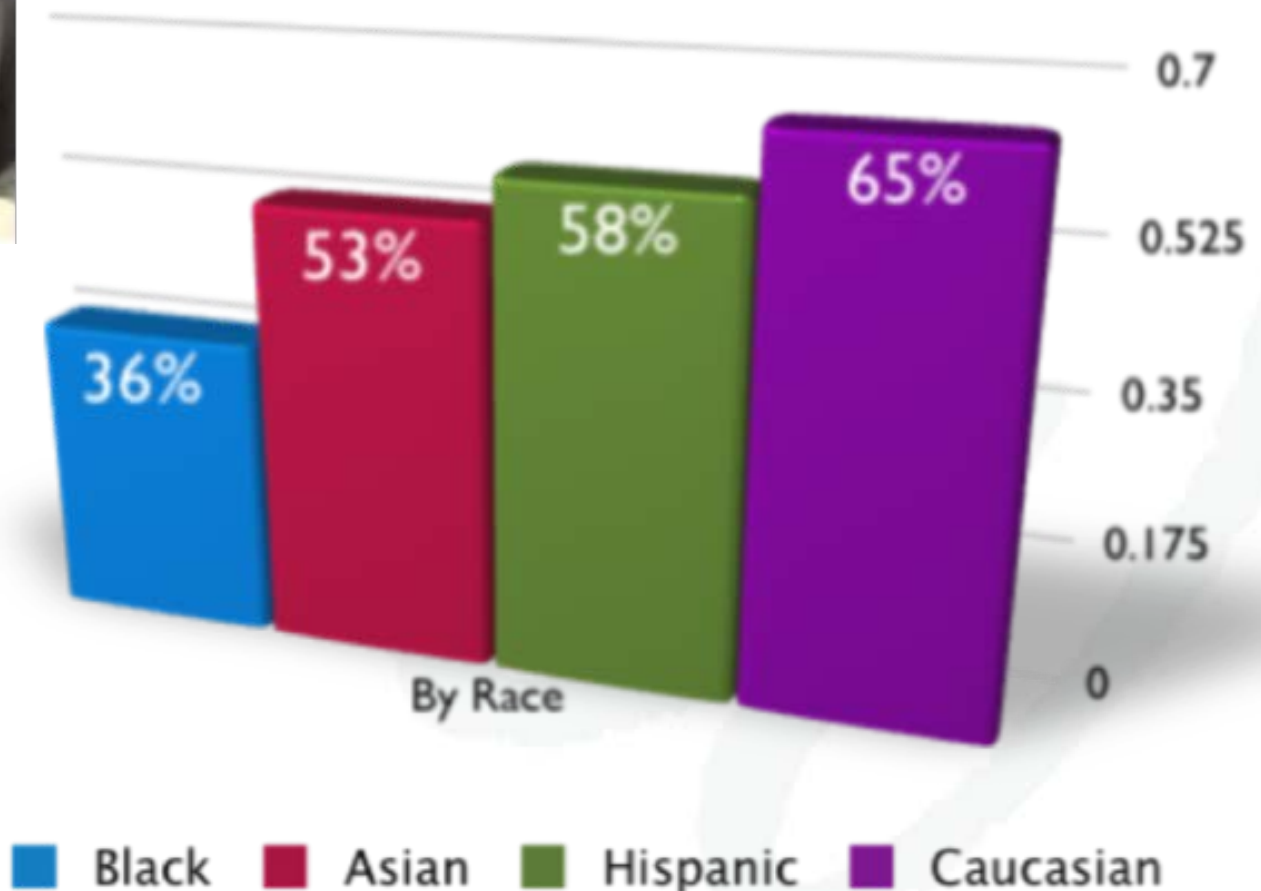
It's a drain pool!



What's A Watershed?



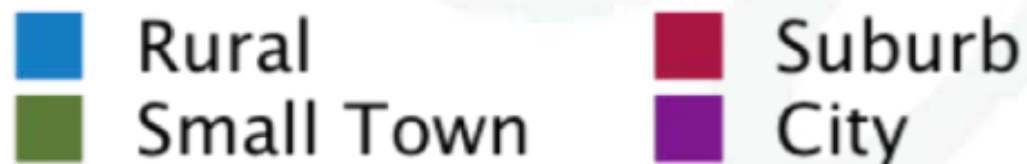
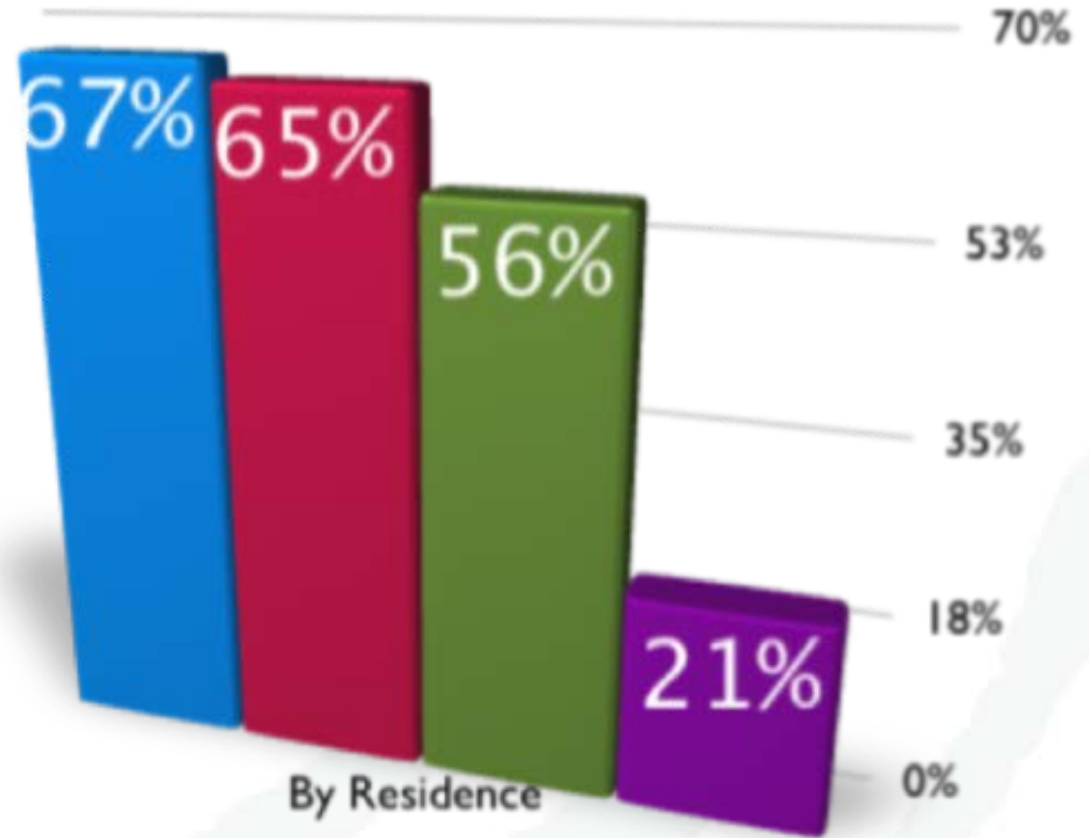
Water...Shed..
.?



What's a Watershed



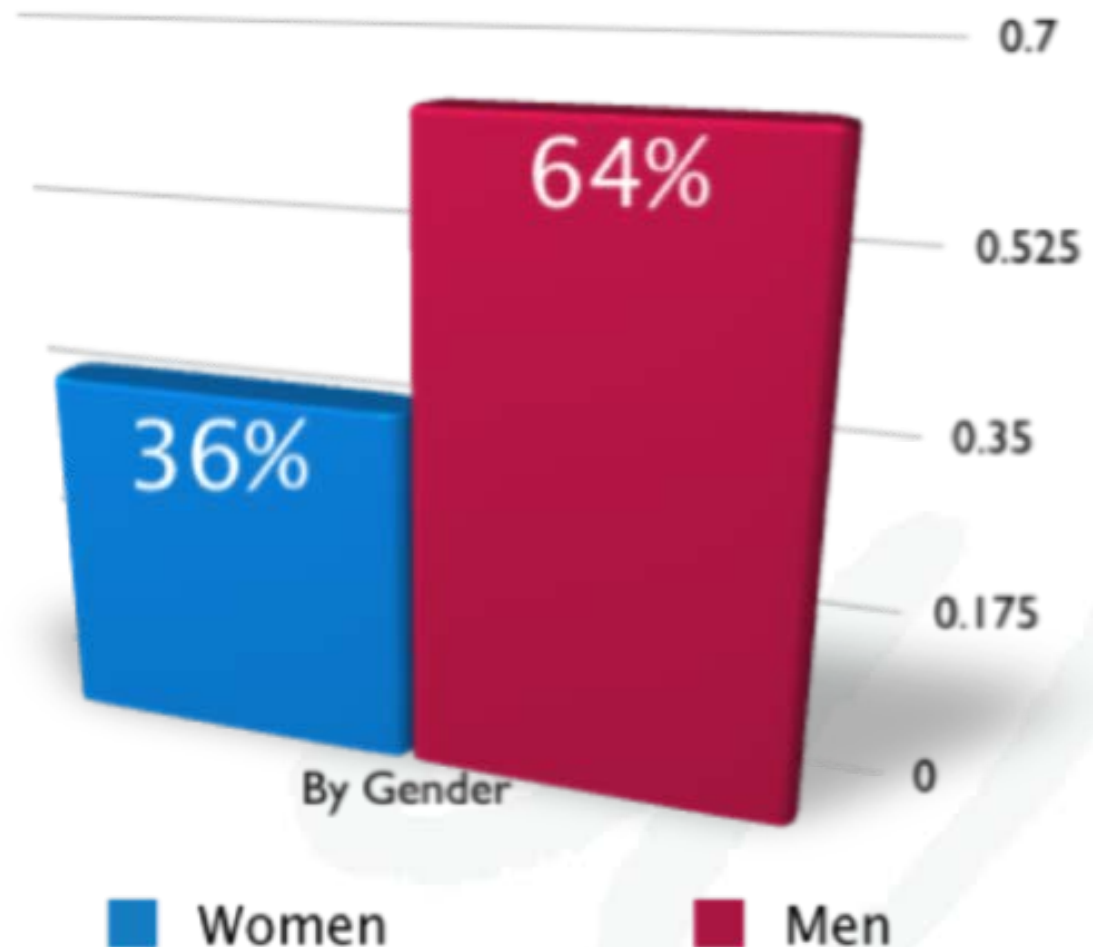
I don't
Know



What's A Watershed?



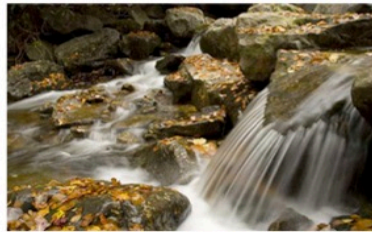
Where you
go to the
bathroom?



Discussion Exercise #1:

Schuylkill Project

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Lofty Creek in the headwaters of the Little Schuylkill River



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Damselfly adult

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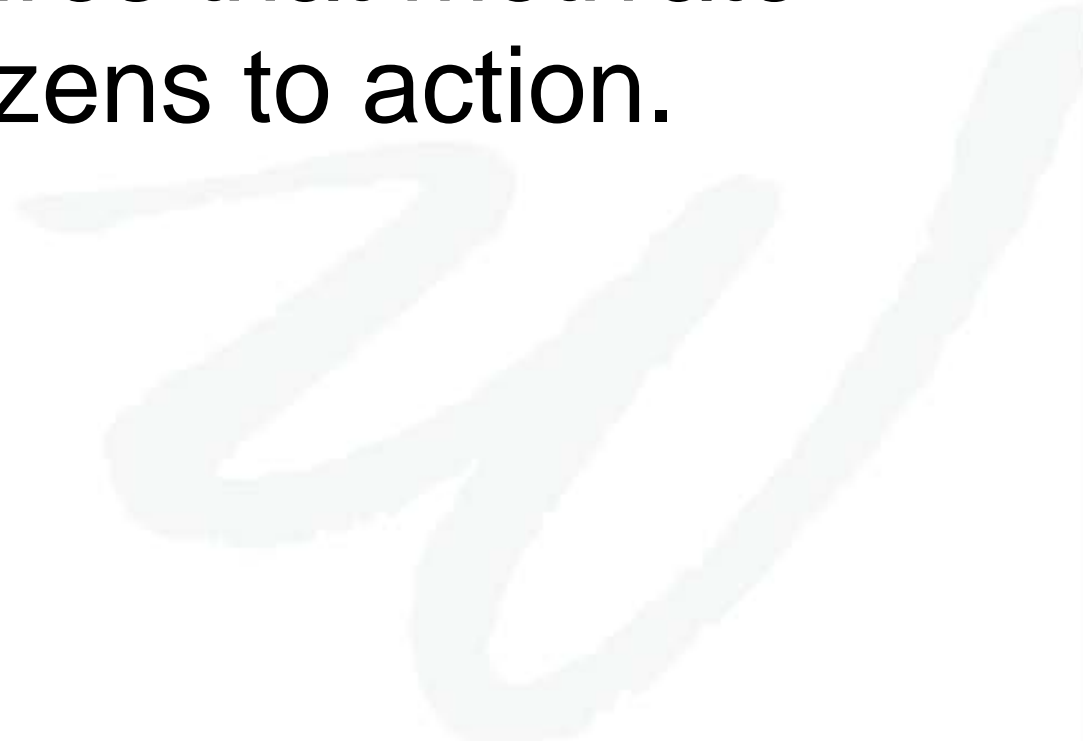


Read the description of the "Schuylkill Project" and the summaries of four "everyday citizens." How do you imagine these citizens would react to the Schuylkill Project piece?

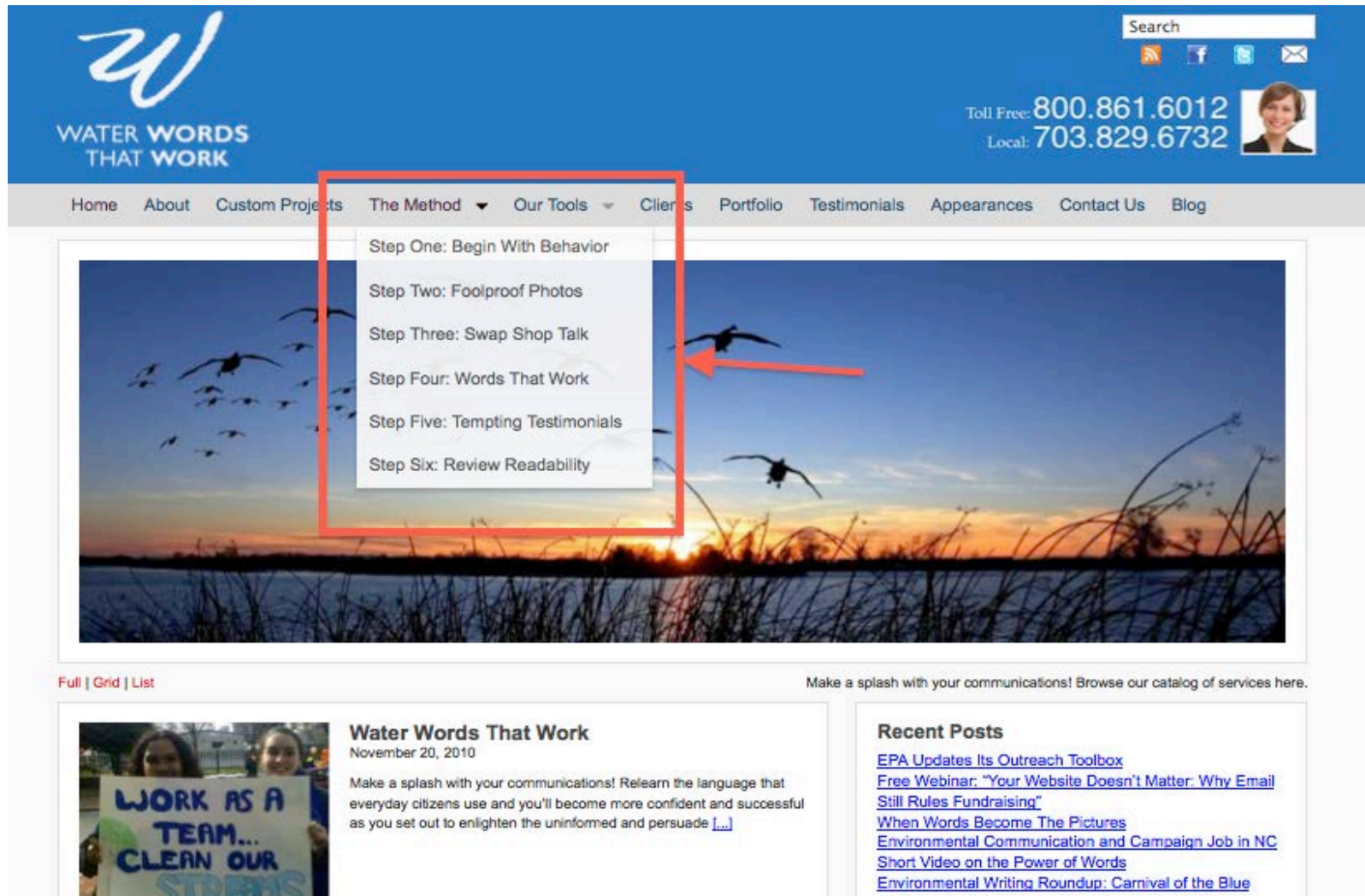


Environmental Message Method

A step-by-step process for **translating** professional conservation materials into words and pictures that motivate everyday citizens to action.



Environmental Message Method



The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with a dropdown menu open for 'The Method'. The dropdown menu contains the following items:

- Step One: Begin With Behavior
- Step Two: Foolproof Photos
- Step Three: Swap Shop Talk
- Step Four: Words That Work
- Step Five: Tempting Testimonials
- Step Six: Review Readability

A red box highlights the dropdown menu, and a red arrow points to the 'Step Four: Words That Work' option. The background of the website features a sunset over a body of water with birds flying in the sky.

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Full | Grid | List

Make a splash with your communications! Browse our catalog of services here.

Water Words That Work
November 20, 2010
Make a splash with your communications! Relearn the language that everyday citizens use and you'll become more confident and successful as you set out to enlighten the uninformed and persuade [...]

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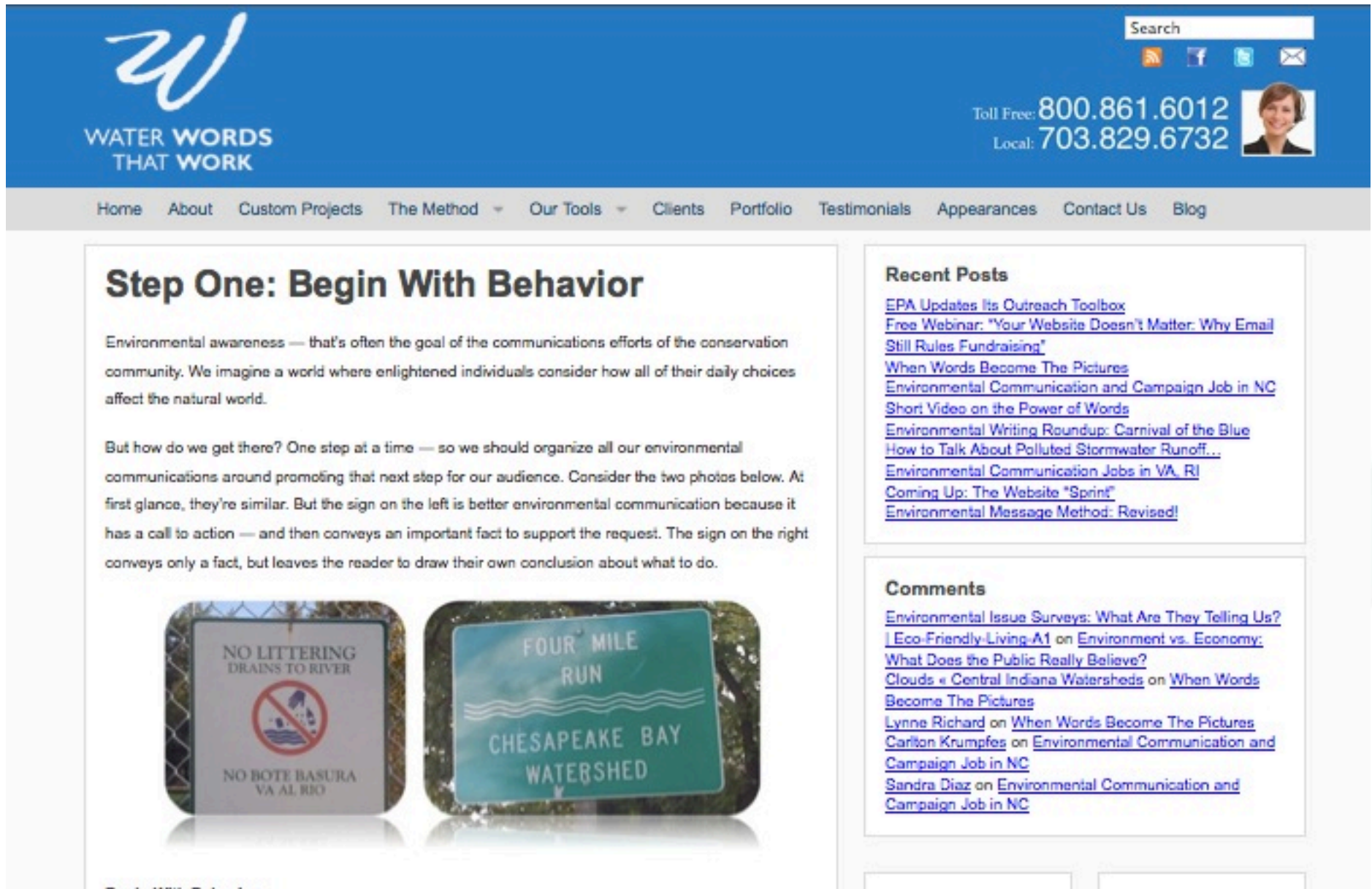


The Due Diligence Test Panel

A screenshot of the Water Words That Work website. The header is blue with the company logo and name on the left, and contact information (Toll Free: 800.861.6012, Local: 703.829.6732) and a search bar on the right. A navigation menu is located below the header. The main content area features an article titled 'Due Diligence Test Panel' with a sub-headline 'Water Words That Work, LLC | November 20, 2010 - 8:23 pm'. The article includes two rows of three photographs of a woman with blonde hair, each showing a different facial expression: the top row shows her smiling, pointing to her lips, and shouting; the bottom row shows her looking surprised, smiling broadly, and covering her mouth. Below the photos is a caption: 'Are you getting the reaction you want out there? Let us help you find out.' The article text continues: 'Raising environmental awareness — raising money, influencing conservation policy, and encouraging environmentally friendly lifestyles — is crucial to your success! So why guess at how the public will react to your message?' To the right of the article is a 'Recent Posts' section with several links to other articles, and a 'Comments' section with a list of user comments and their associated article titles. At the bottom right, there are 'Categories' and 'Archive' dropdown menus.

A research tool that measures how everyday citizens will react to a message from you

Step One: Begin with Behavior




The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, search bar, contact information (Toll Free: 800.861.6012, Local: 703.829.6732), and a navigation menu. The main content area features the article title 'Step One: Begin With Behavior' and two paragraphs of text. Below the text are two photographs of environmental signs. The right sidebar contains 'Recent Posts' and 'Comments' sections with various article links.

Step One: Begin With Behavior

Environmental awareness — that's often the goal of the communications efforts of the conservation community. We imagine a world where enlightened individuals consider how all of their daily choices affect the natural world.

But how do we get there? One step at a time — so we should organize all our environmental communications around promoting that next step for our audience. Consider the two photos below. At first glance, they're similar. But the sign on the left is better environmental communication because it has a call to action — and then conveys an important fact to support the request. The sign on the right conveys only a fact, but leaves the reader to draw their own conclusion about what to do.



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Step One: Begin with Behavior

- 1. Personal Behavior:** Scooping the poop, new lawn care habits, household water and energy conservation, etc.
- 2. Political Behavior:** Boycotting a bad company, signing a petition, attending a hearing, writing an official, etc.
- 3. Charitable Behavior:** Donating time or money, writing a group into their will, participating in a walk-a-thon or other charity event.

Step One: Begin with Behavior

5. Please rate the following statements about the desired outcome. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The piece makes it clear what I can do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident others would do their part	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident my action would make a difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please elaborate on your answer to the last statement about "making a difference:" *

The Test Panel rates materials this way...

Step One: Begin with Behavior



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line

Low Scores for Step One

- There was so much garbage shown and the damage was so big that it gave me pause. **Would what I could do really help stop** all that horrible waste?
- I think I'm to avoid runoff of some sort but **am not clear on what I can do** that actually closes a beach or makes a fish sneeze.
- **The actions of one person alone do not really add up to much...**

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Step One: Begin with Behavior



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line



High Scores for Step One

- If i contribute by planting a tree or just doing small things **i can make a difference** in my community and decrease the affect on water pollution.
- One person's actions make a difference in the total pollution problem. **If one person's actions are multiplied by the actions of many people**, then **together thay can make a huge difference** in the total polluton problem.
- Knowing that small actions can make a big difference is **very motivational**. And the video provides ways for someone to easily do that.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Education vs. Action



Education vs. Action

July 21, 2008, 5:35 pm

Protest at Radio Station Over Autism Comments

By SEWELL CHAN



Todd Shapiro, right, took part in a protest outside WOR's office in Lower Manhattan over Michael Savage's comments about autism. Councilmen David I. Weprin, left, and Eric N. Giola, center, also demonstrated. (Photo: Patrick Andrade for The New York Times)

Education vs. Action

Is my child Autistic? ...



Watch for Red flags of Autism in your child

The following red flags may indicate a child is at risk for atypical development, and is in need of an immediate evaluation.

- ▶ No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months
- ▶ No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months
- ▶ No babbling by 12 months
- ▶ Avoids eye contact
- ▶ Trouble forming relationships
- ▶ Difficulty using language
- ▶ Doesn't respond to emotional signals

Discussion/Exercise #2

Read the article highlighted on the right.

Come up with some examples of:

- Personal Behaviors
- Charitable Behaviors
- Political Behaviors

That are relevant to this piece.

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Mayfly larva on stream bottom

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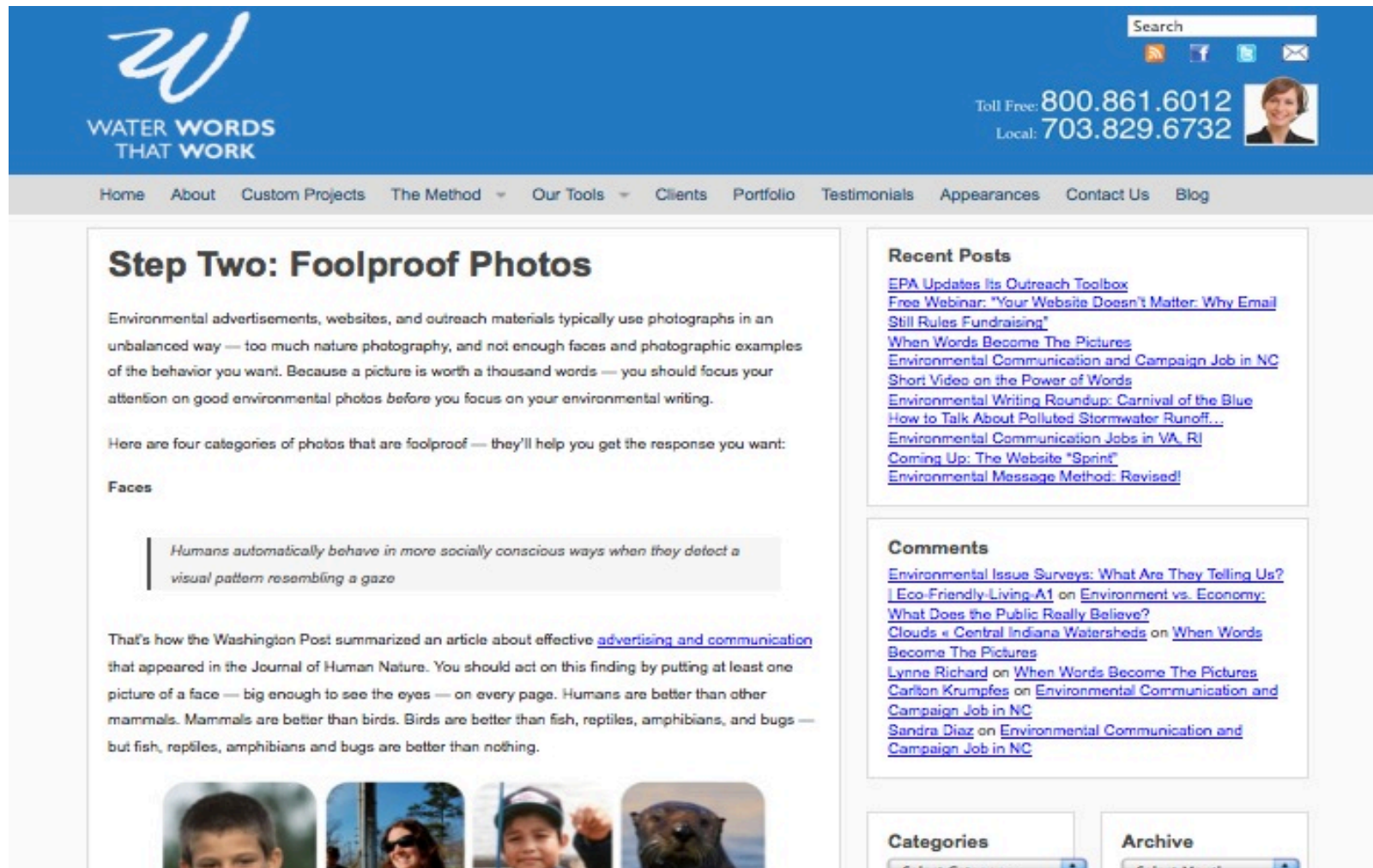
Damselfly adult

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Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, search bar, and contact information. The main content area features the article title 'Step Two: Foolproof Photos' and a quote about human behavior. The right sidebar contains sections for 'Recent Posts' and 'Comments'. At the bottom, there are 'Categories' and 'Archive' dropdown menus.

WATER WORDS THAT WORK

Home About Custom Projects The Method Our Tools Clients Portfolio Testimonials Appearances Contact Us Blog

Step Two: Foolproof Photos

Environmental advertisements, websites, and outreach materials typically use photographs in an unbalanced way — too much nature photography, and not enough faces and photographic examples of the behavior you want. Because a picture is worth a thousand words — you should focus your attention on good environmental photos *before* you focus on your environmental writing.

Here are four categories of photos that are foolproof — they'll help you get the response you want:

Faces

Humans automatically behave in more socially conscious ways when they detect a visual pattern resembling a gaze

That's how the Washington Post summarized an article about effective [advertising and communication](#) that appeared in the Journal of Human Nature. You should act on this finding by putting at least one picture of a face — big enough to see the eyes — on every page. Humans are better than other mammals. Mammals are better than birds. Birds are better than fish, reptiles, amphibians, and bugs — but fish, reptiles, amphibians and bugs are better than nothing.

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Categories
Select Category

Archive
Select Month

Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos

7. Please rate the following statements about the images. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The images get my attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The images demonstrate what I can do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The images show how my actions make a difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the images in this piece: *

Low Scores for Step Two

- Showing a couple of pictures of fish and a bald eagle doesn't really tell me much about how my efforts would make a difference.
- Two men shaking hands and what looks like a woman hiding behind a tree. Not impressed.
Let's see some action!
- I actually had to go back and look at the pictures since I didn't remember a thing about them- so they really weren't attention grabbing.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

High Scores for Step Two

- I think the **photos** are relevant and appealing but **should be larger, cut down the text a bit to make room.**
- It shows the causes of pollution and also what I can do as a citizen. **It wouldn't hurt to put another picture.**
- The images show how people of all ages and skills can help save the river, from children to skilled workers and experts who pitch in and get their hands dirty

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Faces



Good Pictures!

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Community Assistance
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Want to connect your
community to nature?
We can help.



If you want to protect your local river, save an unspoiled landscape, or build trails to help everyone enjoy nature, the National Park Service can help.



The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program specialists can help you to:

- Connect with partners
- Assess ideas and options
- Create workable plans
- Locate funding
- Achieve your vision!

We've helped in hundreds of communities nationwide, where neighbors are working together to create greener, healthier communities for the future.

To find out whether we can help you make a difference where you live, just get in touch:

202-354-6900
nps_rtca@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/rtca



Bad Pictures!



Jane Goodall Knows



“Monkey See,
Monkey Do”

Monkey See, Monkey Do





Monkey See, Monkey Do



A Common Mistake



All the soap, scum, and oily grit runs along the curb. Then into a storm drain and directly into our lakes, rivers, and streams. And that causes pollution which is unhealthy for everyone. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy! Wash your car on the grass or gravel instead of the street. Or better yet, take it to a car wash where the water gets treated or recycled.

Foolproof Photos



Discussion/Exercise #3

If you could replace some of the images on the right, what would you replace them with?

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Damselfly adult


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Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk





 Toll Free: 800.861.6012
 Local: 703.829.6732
 

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Step Three: Swap Shop Talk

When it comes to raising environmental awareness among everyday citizens, professional vocabulary like "riparian," "watershed," and "impervious surface" is an obstacle. The more you throw words like these at everyday citizens, the less confident and comfortable they will feel about their ability to [make a difference](#).

Trying to use environmental advertisements and outreach materials to teach new vocabulary is generally a bad idea. Adults learn, on average, less than one new word per week. When presented with a vocabulary lesson, many will perceive that as a situation that makes them feel stupid and that they want to avoid.

Step three of the Water Words That Work message method is to *swap out* your shop talk and replace it with plain English. You'll give up some nuance and precision — but you'll also get more agreement, action, and cooperation — and that leads to environmental awareness.

And here are some examples of [nature protection](#) and [pollution control](#) "shop talk." The more you use them, the more people you will exclude from the conversation. Click the link for citations on the shortcomings of these terms.

If you are wondering about a term that is not on the list below, put it to the shop talk test — could your mother define the term for a stranger without your help. If yes, you can leave the word in. If not, take it out and replace it with something easier to understand.

Words With Documented Shortcomings

Term	Issue	Try Substituting...
Alternative	Clean and safe energy	

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Categories

Select Category ▼

Archive

Select Month ▼

Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

9. Please rate the following statements about the message. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The piece has a clear message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could explain this piece to others without showing it to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The piece was prepared with the general public in mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How would you describe the audience this piece is intended for? *

Low Scores for Step Three

- it is written for... someone a lot **smarter than i**
- ...it is **not** written in an interesting or **easy to understand** manner for the general public.
- It gives the facts in a **dry** and clear way but it is **not exciting**...

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)



High Scores for Step Three

- This piece is intended for everyone. It is a simple piece with impact-full text and pictures **showing how the average person can make a difference.**
- This piece was clearly intended for a general audience. It was easy to read and informative. It clearly **spelled out what we can do to help** and offered a template and a way to actually support the plan of action.
- It's for people who will write letters, sign petitions, get out and **get involved**

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk



The Grandmother Test: Can you imagine your grandmother using this term correctly in conversation?

If not, it's shoptalk.
Swap it out!

**A: Watershed
management**

**B: Land and water
conservation**

A: Open Space

B: Natural Area

A: Polluted Runoff

B: Stormwater

A: Clean water

B: Water Quality

Discussion/Exercise #4

Swap this shoptalk:

- Benthic macroinvertebrates
- Watershed health assessment
- Stream mitigation

Schuylkill Project

Our Schuylkill River project is an effort to describe stream water quality throughout the 1900-square mile Schuylkill River basin in southeastern Pennsylvania. We assess stream condition by sampling the macroinvertebrates (mostly insects, crustaceans, mollusks and worms) that live on the stream bottom. The presence of particular types as well as their relative abundances are combined with knowledge of the ability of the various types to withstand pollution to come up with a water quality "score" for each site. Water quality scores identify poor quality streams in need of mitigation, high quality streams worthy of special protection, and fair quality streams that may deserve intervention to prevent them from becoming poor quality streams.

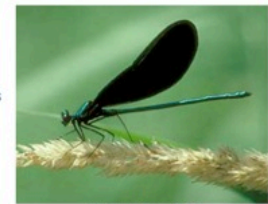


Lofty Creek in the headwaters of the Little Schuylkill River



Mayfly larva on stream bottom

This web site presents the results of 12 years of study, from 1996 to 2007. Included are data from 19 long-term study sites on major tributaries that are sampled each year. These sites provide a current and long-term assessment of watershed health throughout the basin. An additional 120 sites, located upstream from the original 19 sites and



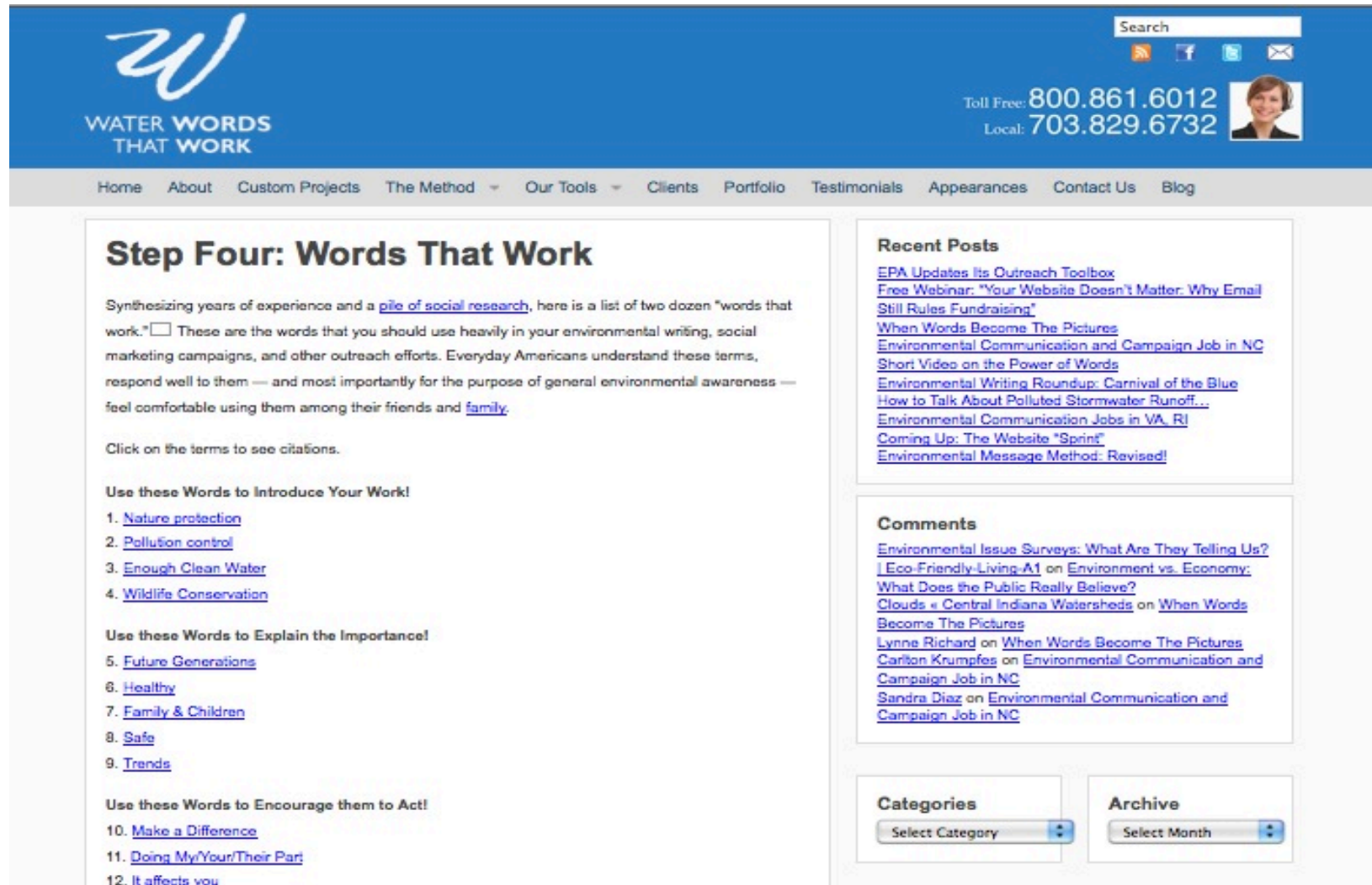
Damselfly adult

sampled in one year only, provide a more complete picture of conditions within the major tributaries within the Schuylkill basin. Throughout this web site, sampling sites are color coded to indicate water quality conditions, with blue signifying "good", yellow "fair" and red "poor".

The site is organized into pages as follows.

- **Introduction** presents general information about the Schuylkill River, its location, history and importance to the area, as well as background on the use macroinvertebrates in stream water quality monitoring.
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- **Sampling Sites** presents an overview of the basin, the location of our 19 long-term monitoring sites, and the various sub-basins for which we have additional data. This page also includes an alphabetical list of all 146 sites, with links to their pages and sub-basins. Six bulleted pages on the side bar beneath the Sampling Sites heading show detailed site locations, chart water quality scores and provide links to pages for individual sites within the following categories or sub-basins:

Step Four: Words That Work



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, search bar, and contact information. The main content area features the article title 'Step Four: Words That Work' and a list of 12 words categorized by their use in environmental writing. The right sidebar contains 'Recent Posts' and 'Comments' sections.

WATER WORDS THAT WORK

Search

Toll Free: 800.861.6012
Local: 703.829.6732

Home About Custom Projects The Method Our Tools Clients Portfolio Testimonials Appearances Contact Us Blog

Step Four: Words That Work

Synthesizing years of experience and a [pile of social research](#), here is a list of two dozen "words that work." □ These are the words that you should use heavily in your environmental writing, social marketing campaigns, and other outreach efforts. Everyday Americans understand these terms, respond well to them — and most importantly for the purpose of general environmental awareness — feel comfortable using them among their friends and [family](#).

Click on the terms to see citations.

Use these Words to Introduce Your Work!

1. [Nature protection](#)
2. [Pollution control](#)
3. [Enough Clean Water](#)
4. [Wildlife Conservation](#)

Use these Words to Explain the Importance!

5. [Future Generations](#)
6. [Healthy](#)
7. [Family & Children](#)
8. [Safe](#)
9. [Trends](#)

Use these Words to Encourage them to Act!

10. [Make a Difference](#)
11. [Doing My/Your/Their Part](#)
12. [It affects you](#)

Recent Posts

- [EPA Updates Its Outreach Toolbox](#)
- [Free Webinar: "Your Website Doesn't Matter: Why Email Still Rules Fundraising"](#)
- [When Words Become The Pictures](#)
- [Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)
- [Short Video on the Power of Words](#)
- [Environmental Writing Roundup: Carnival of the Blue](#)
- [How to Talk About Polluted Stormwater Runoff...](#)
- [Environmental Communication Jobs in VA, RI](#)
- [Coming Up: The Website "Sprint"](#)
- [Environmental Message Method: Revised!](#)

Comments

- [Environmental Issue Surveys: What Are They Telling Us?](#)
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- [Lynne Richard on When Words Become The Pictures](#)
- [Carlton Krumpfes on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)
- [Sandra Diaz on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)

Categories

Select Category

Archive

Select Month



Step Four: Words That Work

11. Please rate the following statements about the issue generally. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The issue is important to society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is urgent to address this issue now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issues like this affect me or my family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the last statement, "issues like this affect me or my family." *



High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that affects water and quality of the land affects me, my family and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
- If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that **affects water** and quality of the land **effects me, my family** and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an **adequate water supply** for our present and **future** needs **affects nearly everyone**.
- If we want to **make the world better** for **future generations** we need to address these issues and **work together** to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Discussion/Exercise #5

Rewrite the first paragraph of this piece.

Begin with Behavior:
Add a call to action.

Swap the shoptalk.

Insert the words that work.

Schuylkill Project

Our Schuylkill River project is an effort to describe stream water quality throughout the 1900-square mile Schuylkill River basin in southeastern Pennsylvania. We assess stream condition by sampling the macroinvertebrates (mostly insects, crustaceans, mollusks and worms) that live on the stream bottom. The presence of particular types as well as their relative abundances are combined with knowledge of the ability of the various types to withstand pollution to come up with a water quality "score" for each site. Water quality scores identify poor quality streams in need of mitigation, high quality streams worthy of special protection, and fair quality streams that may deserve intervention to prevent them from becoming poor quality streams.

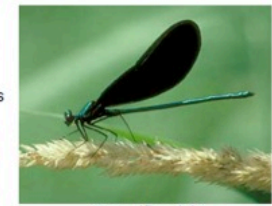


Lofty Creek in the headwaters of the Little Schuylkill River



Mayfly larva on stream bottom

This web site presents the results of 12 years of study, from 1996 to 2007. Included are data from 19 long-term study sites on major tributaries that are sampled each year. These sites provide a current and long-term assessment of watershed health throughout the basin. An additional 120 sites, located upstream from the original 19 sites and



Damselfly adult

sampled in one year only, provide a more complete picture of conditions within the major tributaries within the Schuylkill basin. Throughout this web site, sampling sites are color coded to indicate water quality conditions, with blue signifying "good", yellow "fair" and red "poor".

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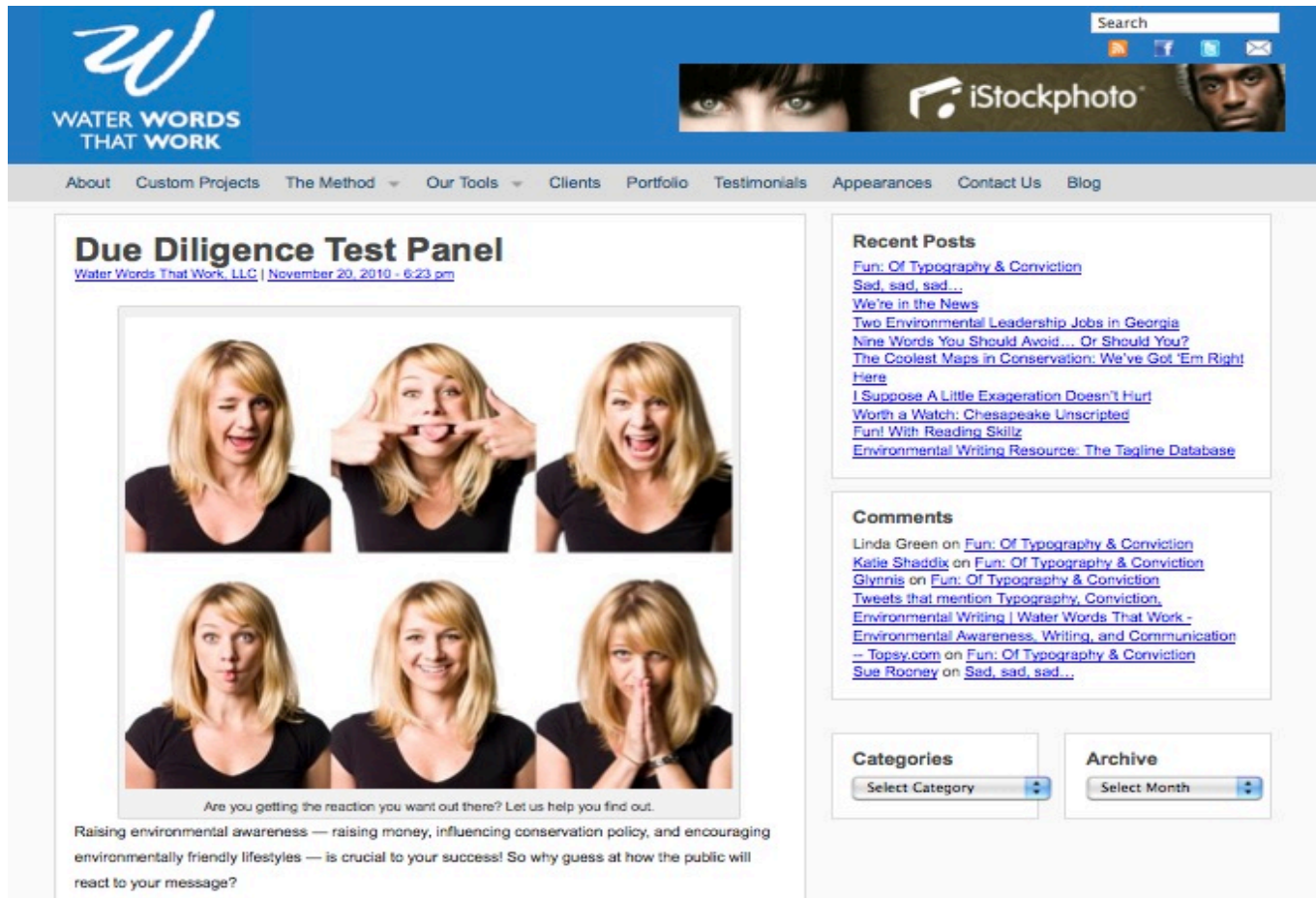
Rules of Thumb



About 1% of the words in your piece should come from the "Words That Work" list.

Use them in Titles, headlines, photo captions, quotes, and other high profile areas.

Try It Yourself!

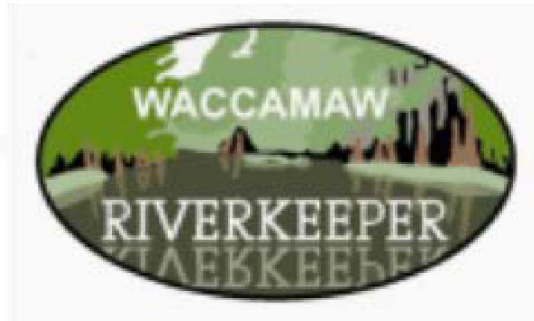


The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, a search bar, and social media icons. The main content area features a blog post titled "Due Diligence Test Panel" with a date of November 20, 2010. The post includes two rows of three photos of a woman with blonde hair, each showing a different facial expression. Below the photos is a caption: "Are you getting the reaction you want out there? Let us help you find out." The post text begins with "Raising environmental awareness — raising money, influencing conservation policy, and encouraging environmentally friendly lifestyles — is crucial to your success! So why guess at how the public will react to your message?" To the right of the post are sections for "Recent Posts" with links to various articles, "Comments" with user names and links, and "Categories" and "Archive" dropdown menus.

Use the Due Diligence Test Panel to improve your next draft!
Just \$199 for nonprofits, just \$249 for everybody else.
Sign up online at <http://waterwordsthatwork.com>



How Many Are We?

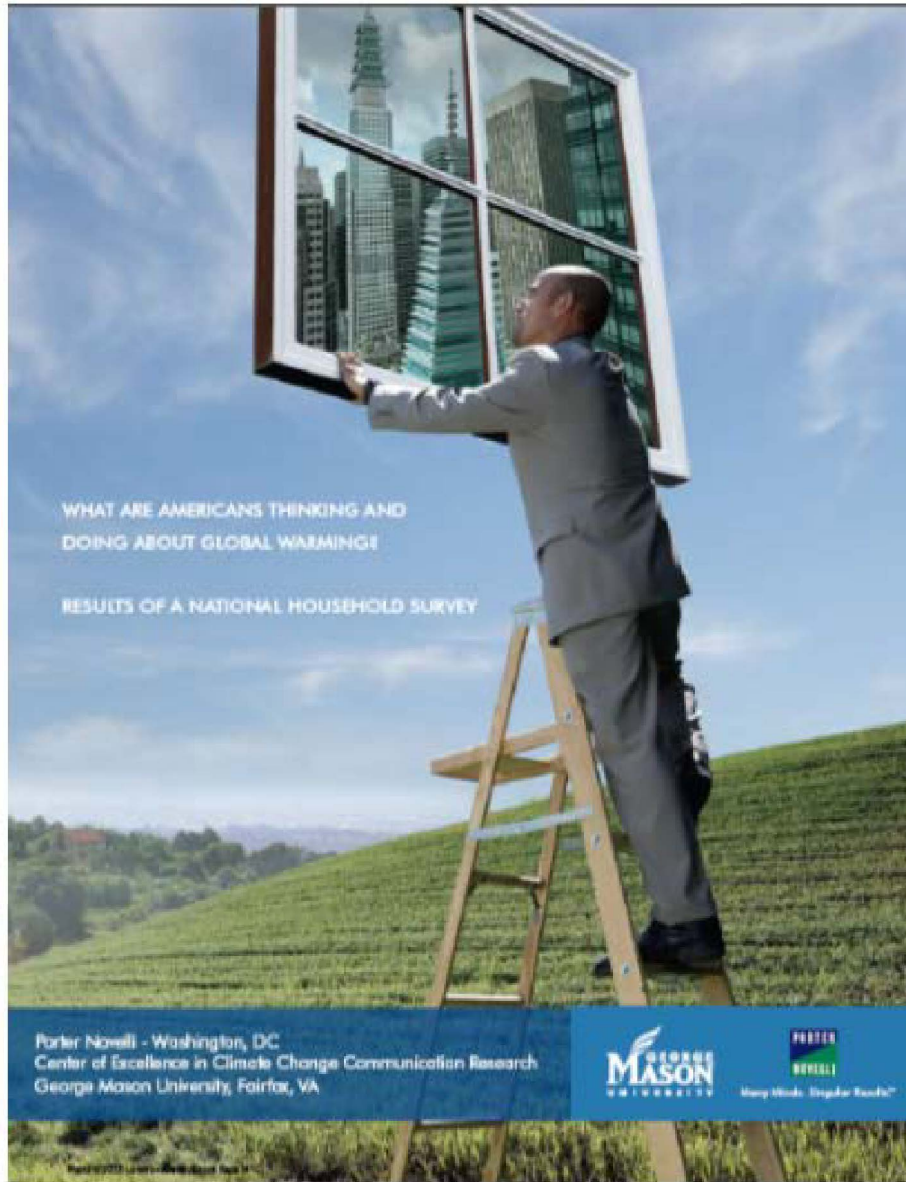


Somewhere between 250,000 and 500,000 individuals

How Many Are They?

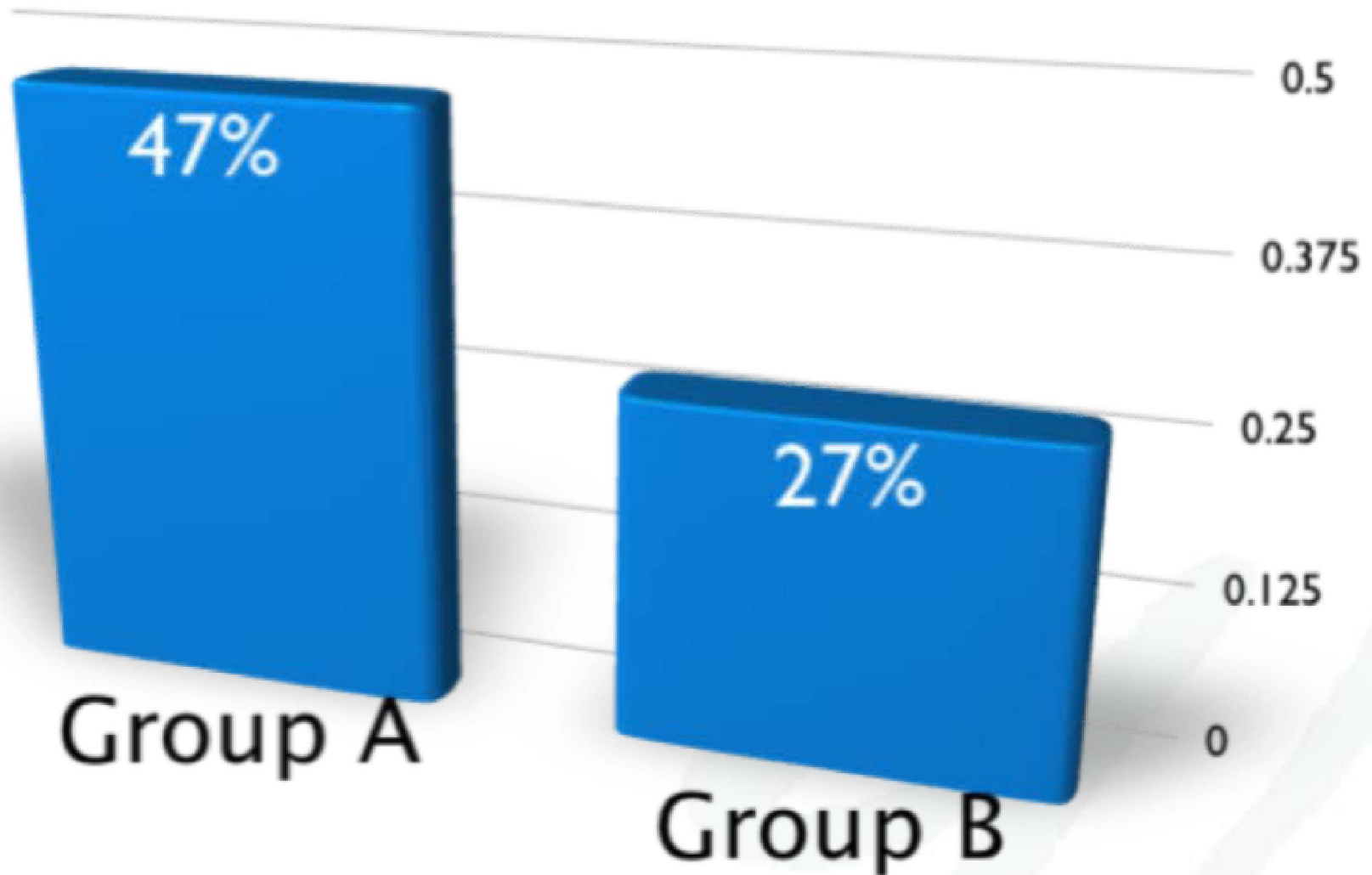


Approx 99.9% of Americans do *not* work for a conservation organization. They are *not* our peers.



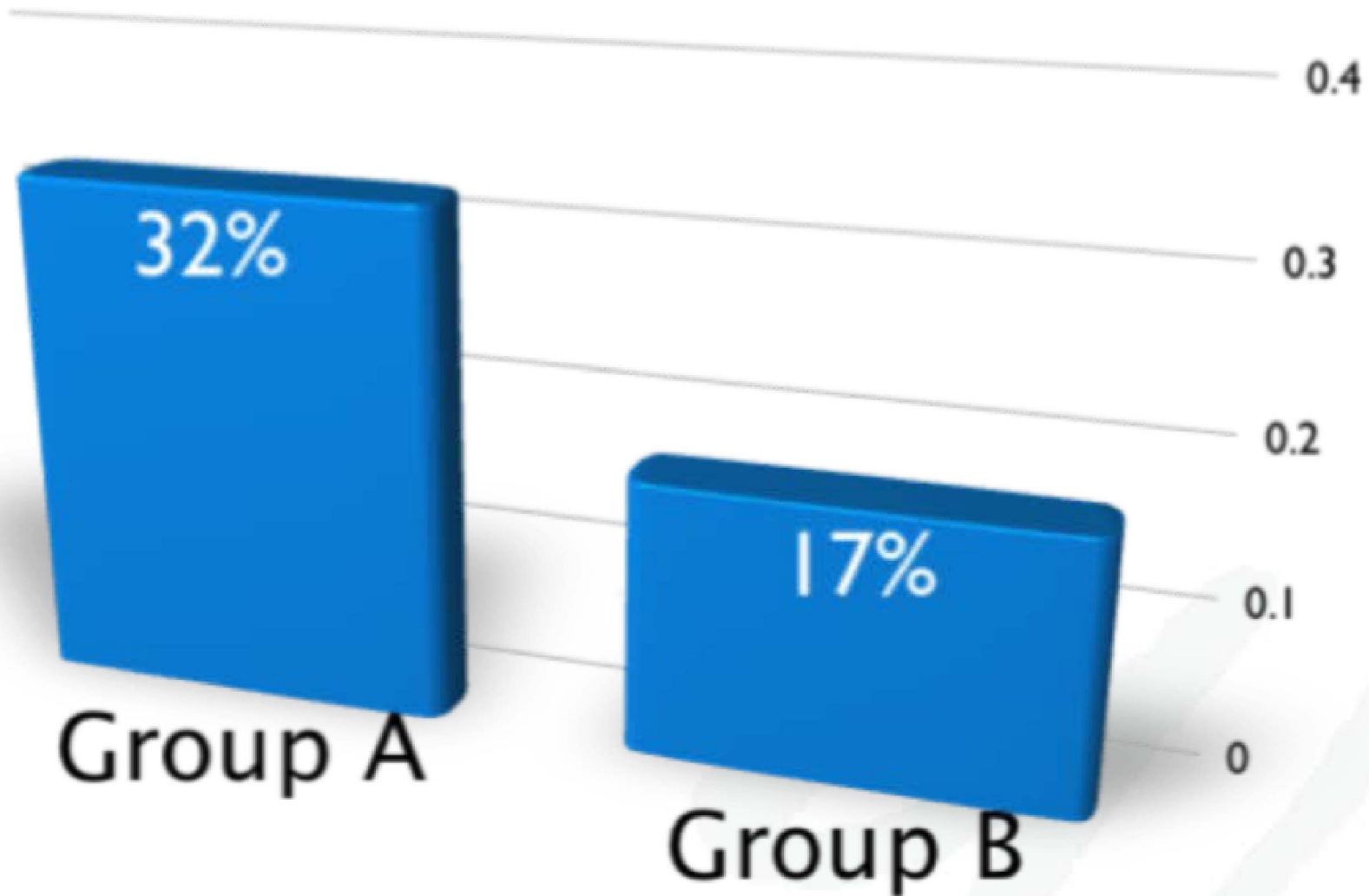
12,000 Participants!

What's the X Factor?



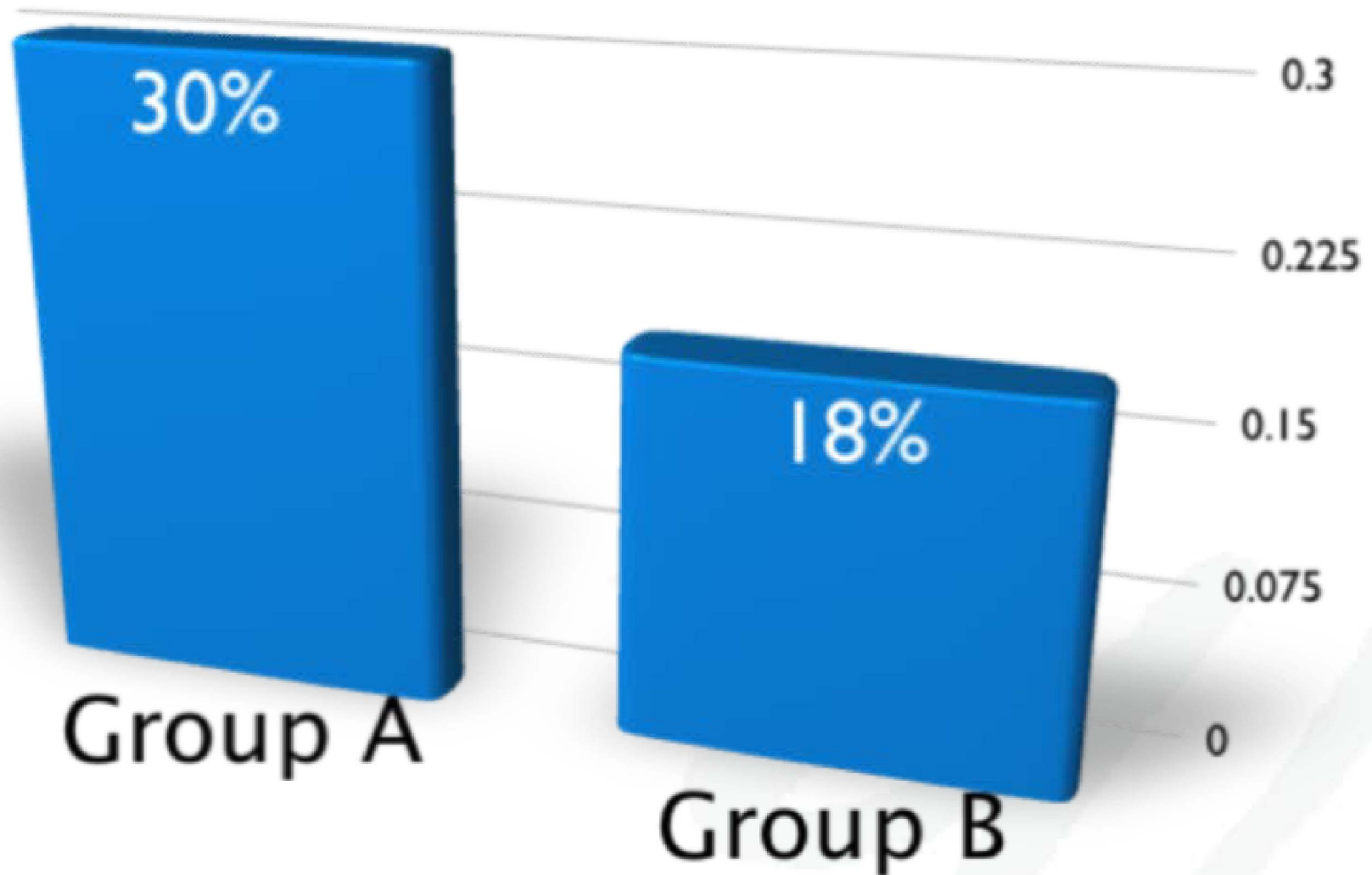
■ Reminded others to be environmentally conscious

What's the X Factor?



■ Voted for the candidate with the best environmental record

What's the X Factor?



■ Recently donated to environmental causes

Group B agrees with this statement:

“The actions of a single person like me
won't make any difference...”

If you can convince your audience that their actions **do make a difference** -- and that **others will do their part**, too -- then they are about *twice as likely* to adopt a pro-environmental behavior than otherwise

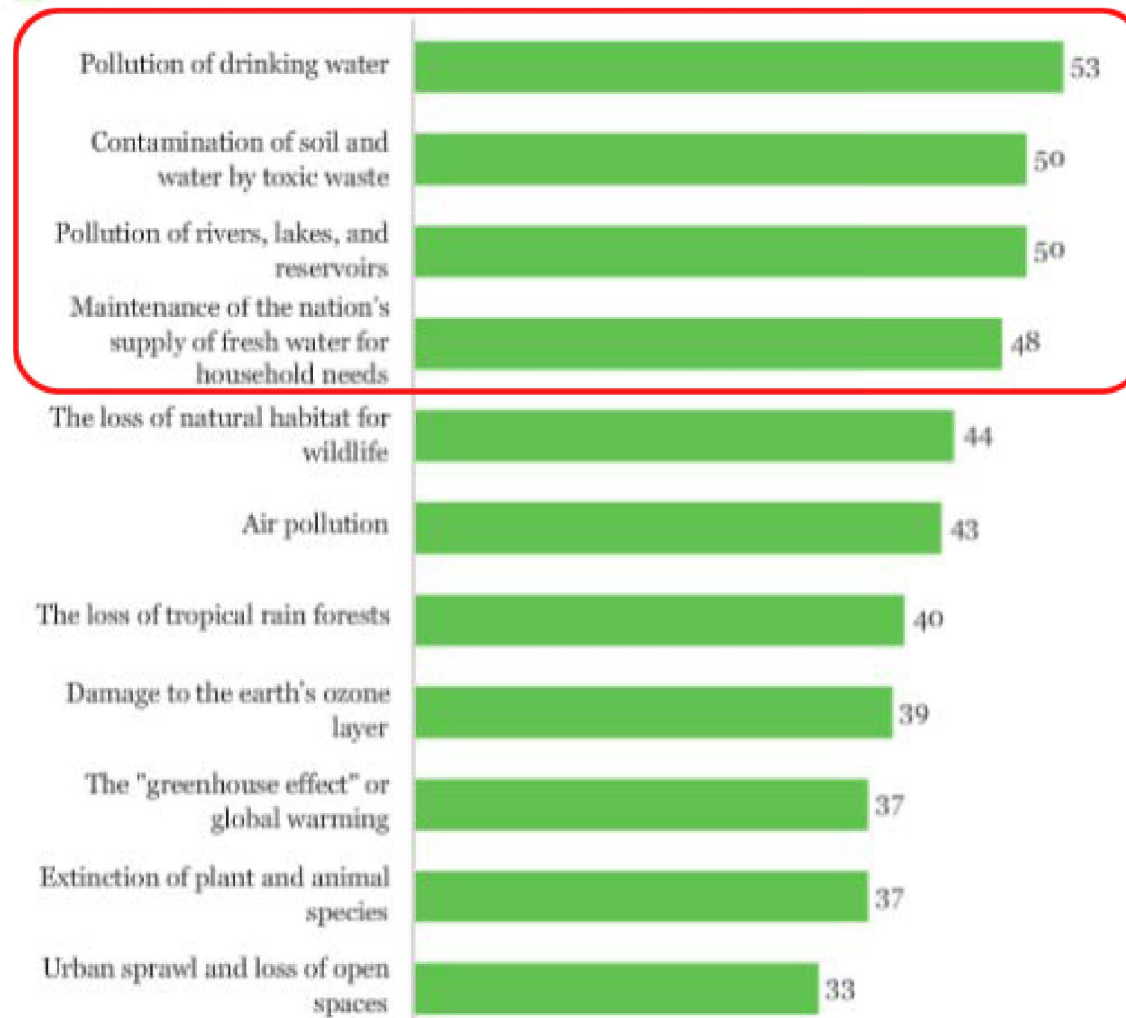
Agenda

- **Leadership and encouragement** produce more action for conservation than education, information, or "awareness."
- The public thinks clean water is the most important environmental issue.
- But **our poor communications** excludes most citizens, and saps their confidence in themselves
- You can use an **Environmental Message Method** to improve your communications -- inserting leadership and encouragement into your information.

Water is a High Priority

I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.

■ % Great deal



Water is a High Priority

Top Environmental Concern, 1989-2008 Gallup Polls

	Top concern	%
2008 Mar 6-9	Pollution of drinking water	61
2007 Mar 11-14	Pollution of drinking water	61
2006 Mar 13-16	Pollution of drinking water	61
2004 Mar 8-11	Pollution of drinking water	61
2003 Mar 3-5	Pollution of drinking water	61
2002 Mar 4-7	Pollution of drinking water	61
2001 Mar 5-7	Pollution of drinking water	61
2000 Apr 3-9	Pollution of drinking water	61
1999 Apr 13-14	Pollution of drinking water	61
1991 Apr 11-14	Pollution of drinking water / Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs	57
1990 Apr 5-8	Pollution of drinking water	57
1989 May 4-7	Pollution of rivers, lakes and reservoirs	57

GALLUP POLL

**Our poor communications saps
citizens' confidence in
themselves, and this holds them
back**



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK



American Jobs Are Sailing Away . . .

Stop Reflagging!

Support YOUR U.S. Merchant Marine



MEBA



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK

Entering

**CHESAPEAKE BAY
WATERSHED**

Please Treasure the Chesapeake



What's A Watershed?



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line

What's A Watershed?

Final Report for

A SURVEY OF CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED RESIDENTS

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS
CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED WATER QUALITY ISSUES**

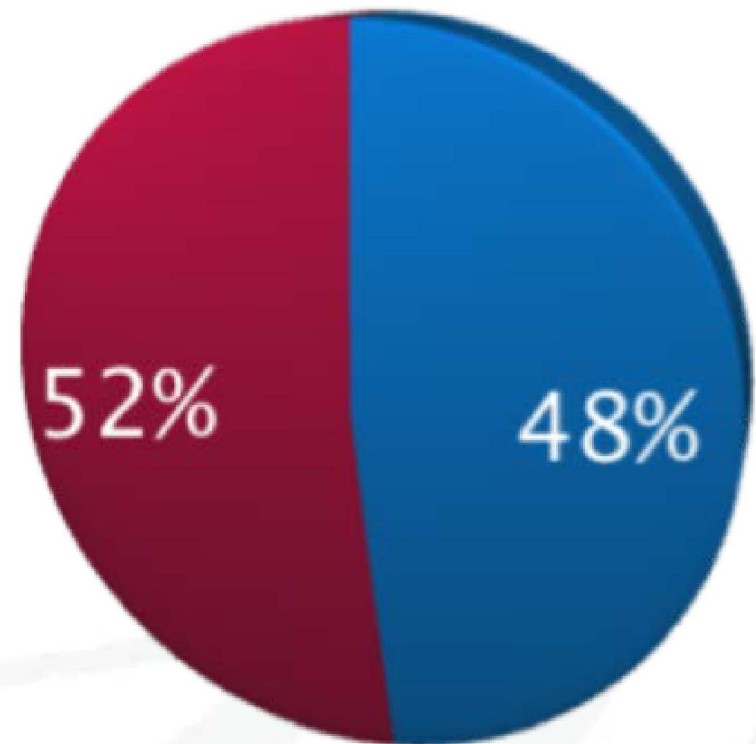
CMI-HDD-02-01

Submitted: September 11, 2002

Prepared for the
Chesapeake Bay Program

Prepared by:

Julie A. McClafferty
Human Dimensions Division
Conservation Management Institute
College of Natural Resources
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
203 W Roanoke Street
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0534
(540) 231-7348
<http://fwie.fw.vt.edu>

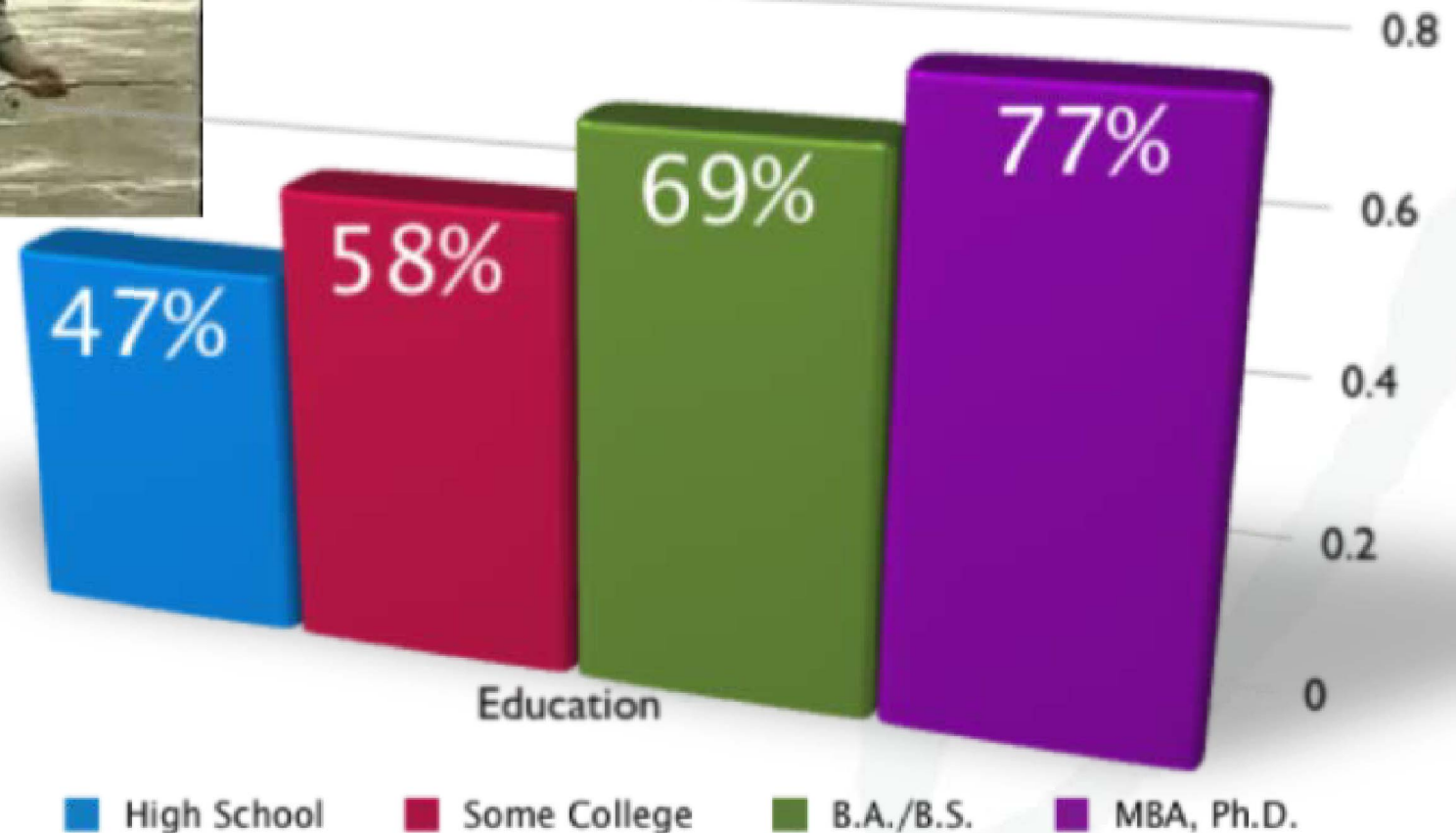


● Guess Right
● Guess Wrong

What's A Watershed?



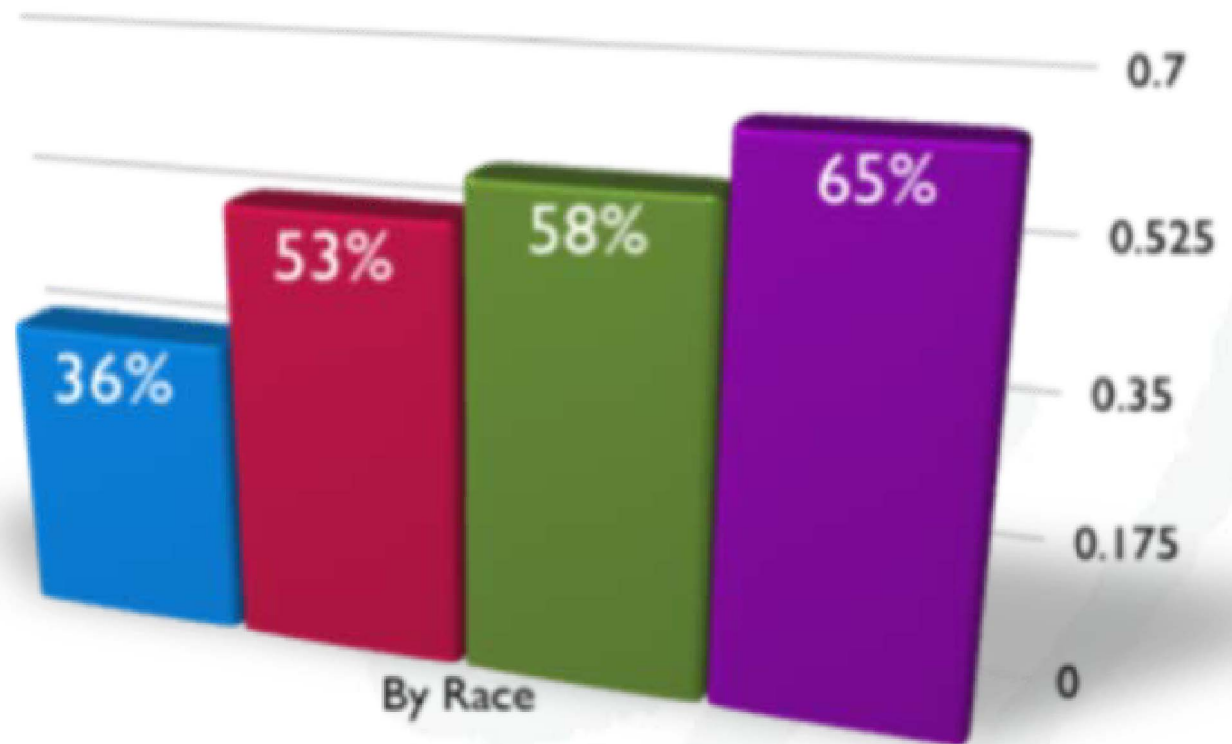
It's a drain pool!



What's A Watershed?

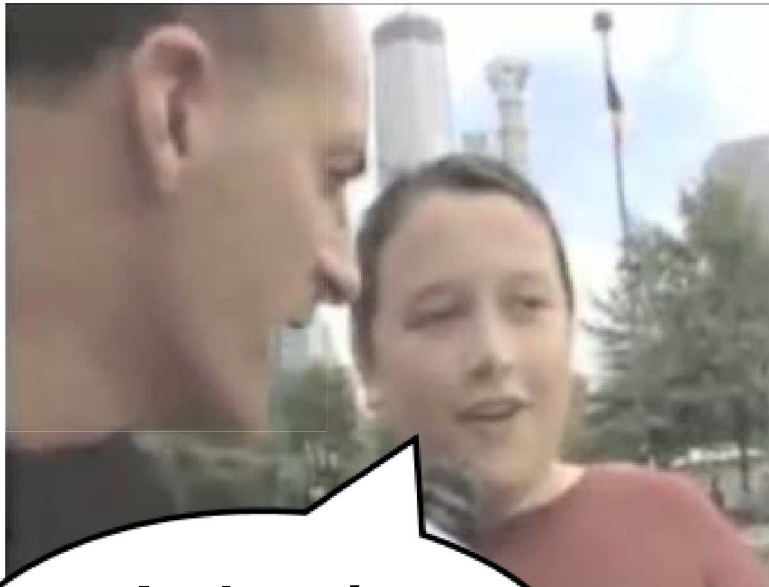


Water...Shed..
.?

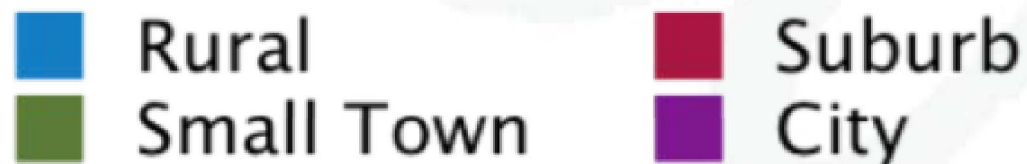
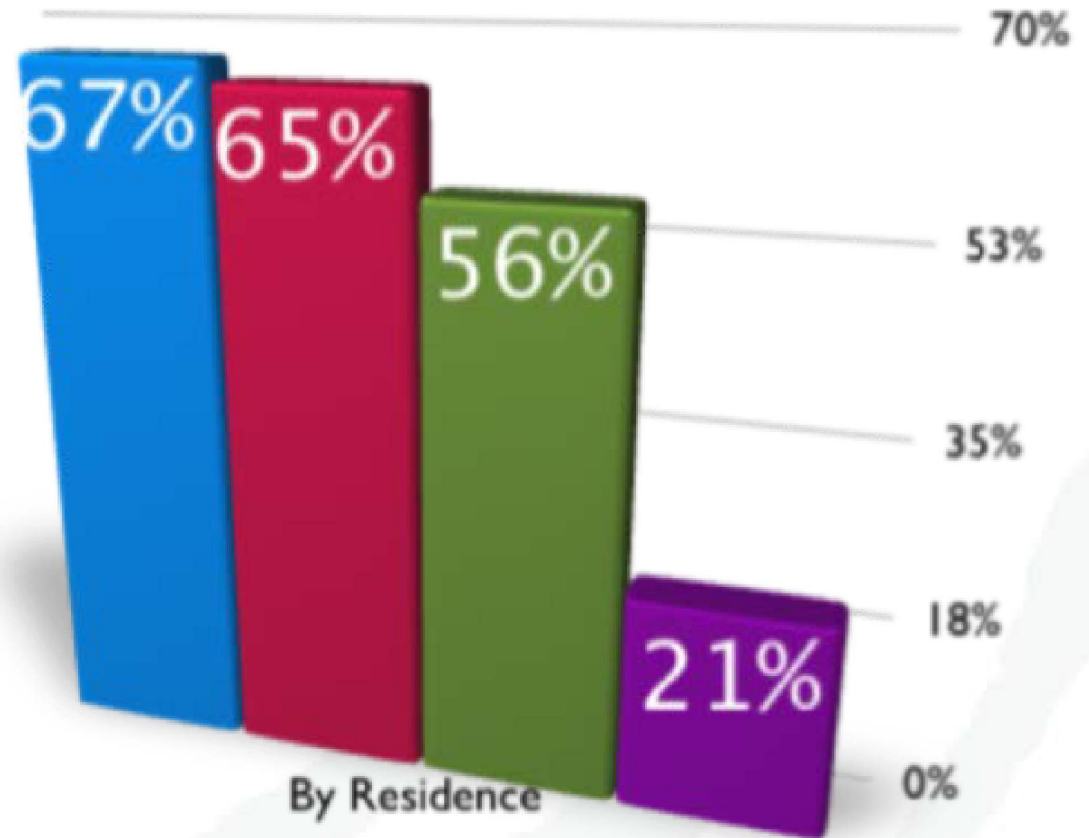


■ Black ■ Asian ■ Hispanic ■ Caucasian

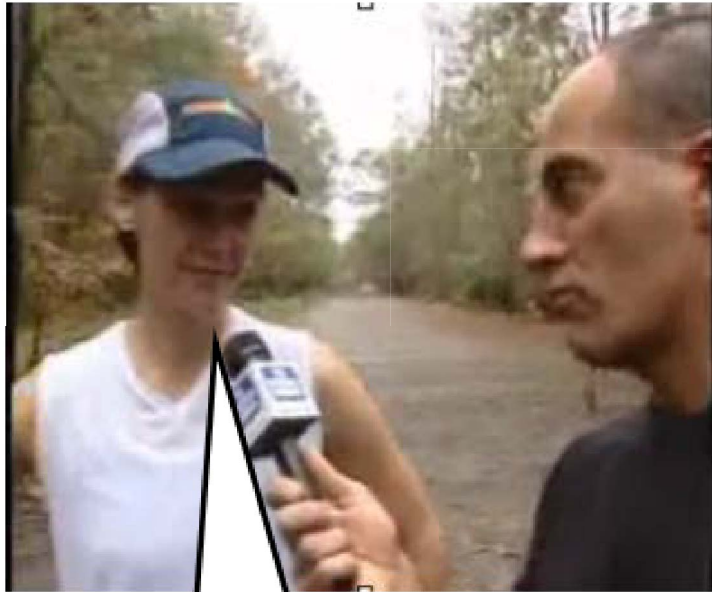
What's a Watershed



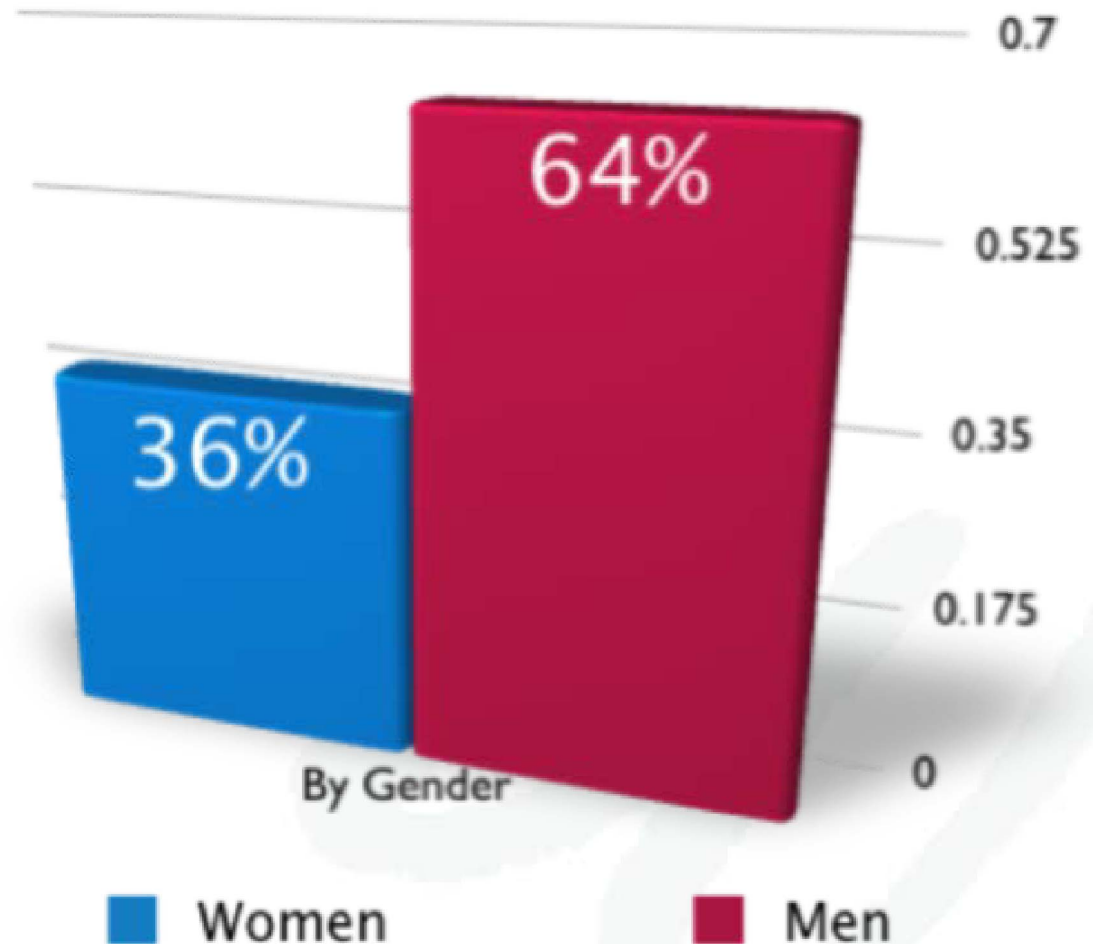
I don't
Know



What's A Watershed?



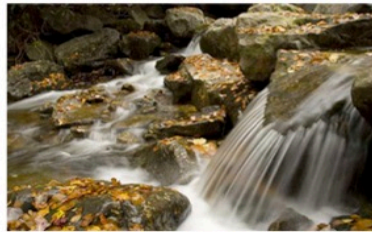
Where you
go to the
bathroom?



Discussion Exercise #1:

Schuylkill Project

Our Schuylkill River project is an effort to describe stream water quality throughout the 1900-square mile Schuylkill River basin in southeastern Pennsylvania. We assess stream condition by sampling the macroinvertebrates (mostly insects, crustaceans, mollusks and worms) that live on the stream bottom. The presence of particular types as well as their relative abundances are combined with knowledge of the ability of the various types to withstand pollution to come up with a water quality "score" for each site. Water quality scores identify poor quality streams in need of mitigation, high quality streams worthy of special protection, and fair quality streams that may deserve intervention to prevent them from becoming poor quality streams.



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Mayfly larva on stream bottom

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Damselfly adult

sampled in one year only, provide a more complete picture of conditions within the major tributaries within the Schuylkill basin. Throughout this web site, sampling sites are color coded to indicate water quality conditions, with blue signifying "good", yellow "fair" and red "poor".

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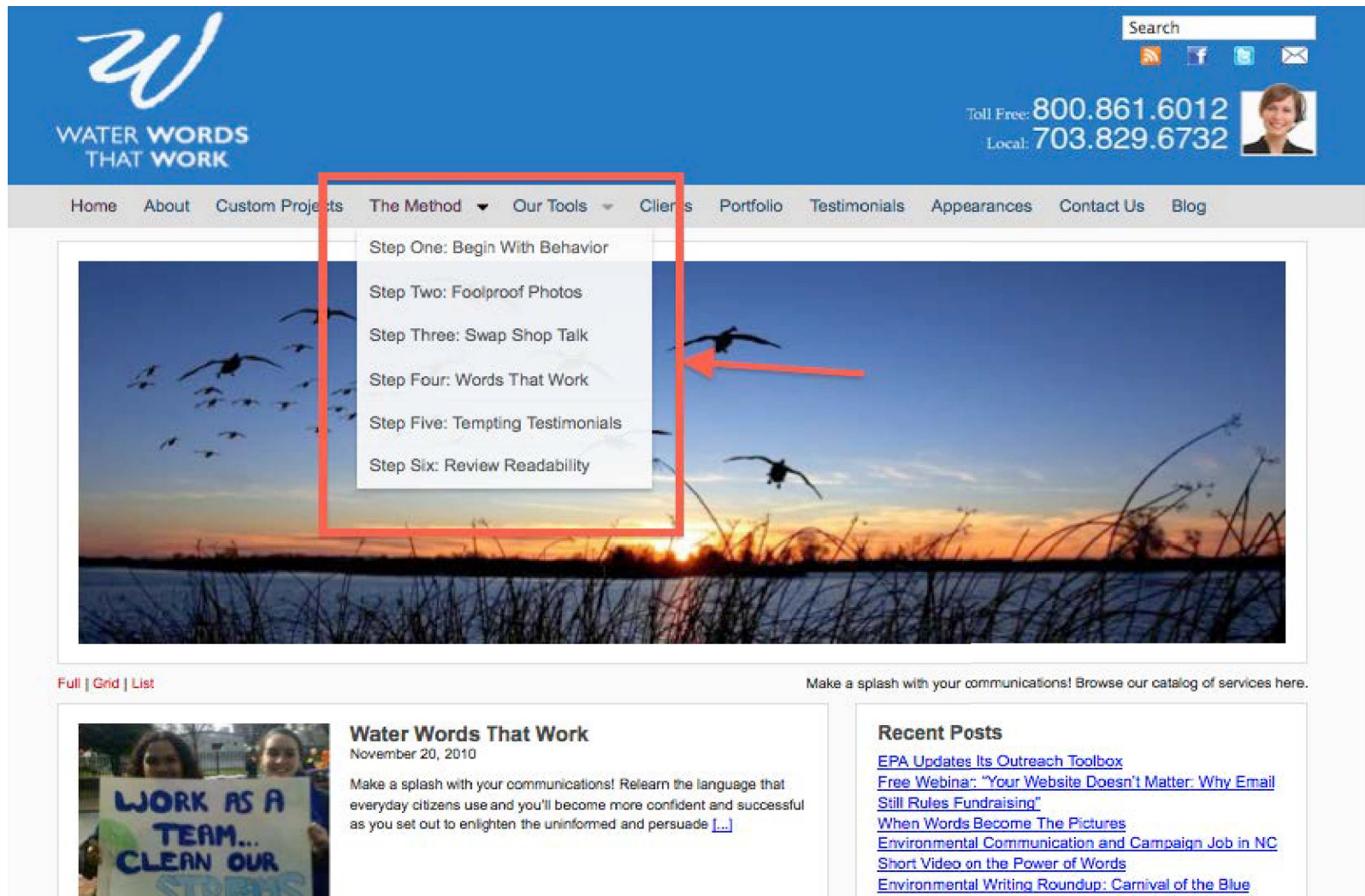
Read the description of the "Schuylkill Project" and the summaries of four "everyday citizens." How do you imagine these citizens would react to the Schuylkill Project piece?



Environmental Message Method

A step-by-step process for **translating** professional conservation materials into words and pictures that motivate everyday citizens to action.

Environmental Message Method



The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with a dropdown for 'The Method'. The dropdown list includes:

- Step One: Begin With Behavior
- Step Two: Foolproof Photos
- Step Three: Swap Shop Talk
- Step Four: Words That Work
- Step Five: Tempting Testimonials
- Step Six: Review Readability

A red box highlights the dropdown menu, and a red arrow points to 'Step Four: Words That Work'. The background of the page features a sunset over a lake with birds in flight.

Search []

Toll Free: 800.861.6012
Local: 703.829.6732

Home About Custom Projects **The Method** Our Tools Clients Portfolio Testimonials Appearances Contact Us Blog

Full | Grid | List

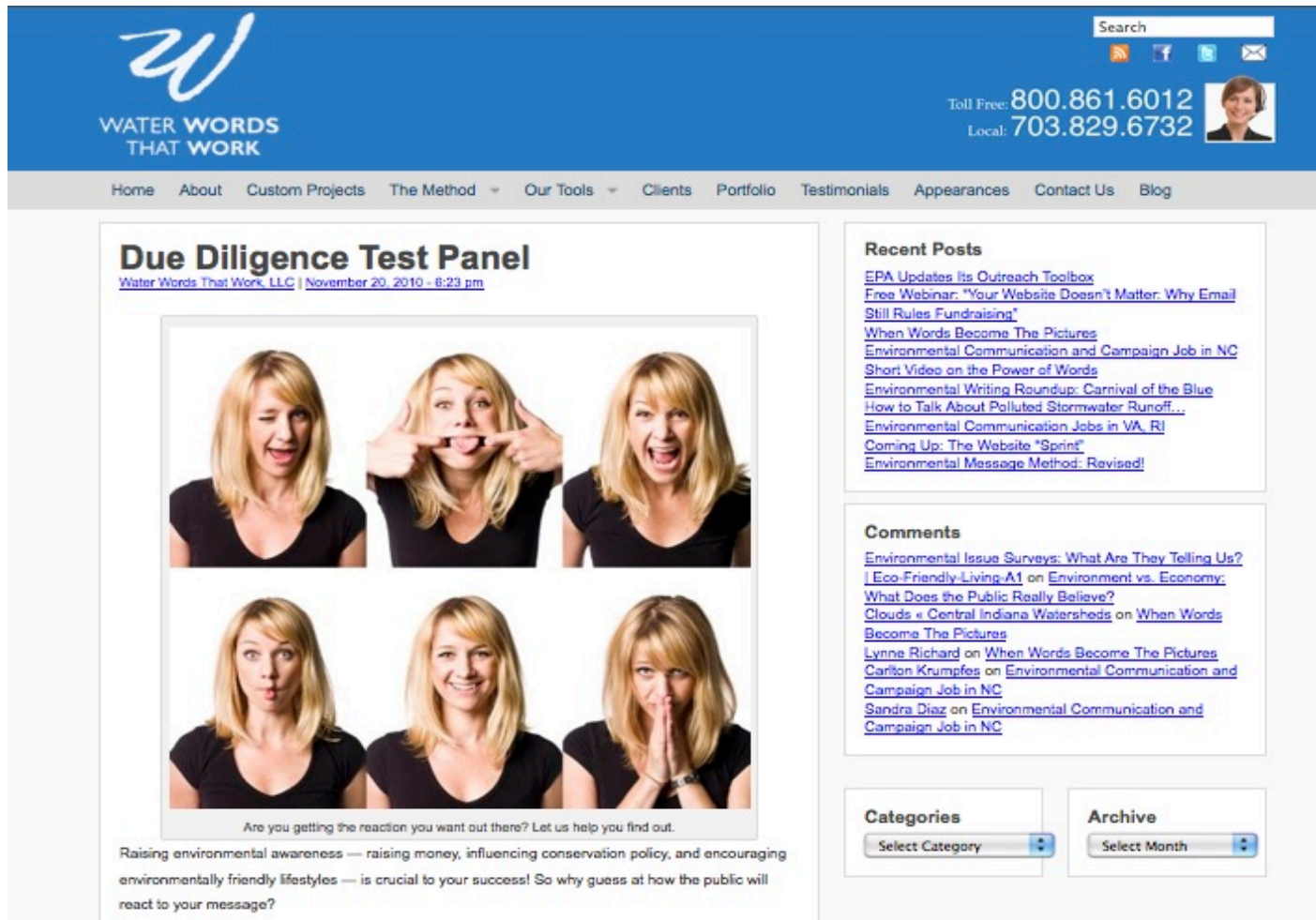
Make a splash with your communications! Browse our catalog of services here.

Water Words That Work
November 20, 2010
Make a splash with your communications! Relearn the language that everyday citizens use and you'll become more confident and successful as you set out to enlighten the uninformed and persuade [...]

Recent Posts

- [EPA Updates Its Outreach Toolbox](#)
- [Free Webinar: "Your Website Doesn't Matter. Why Email Still Rules Fundraising"](#)
- [When Words Become The Pictures](#)
- [Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)
- [Short Video on the Power of Words](#)
- [Environmental Writing Roundup: Carnival of the Blue](#)

The Due Diligence Test Panel



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, contact information (Toll Free: 800.861.6012, Local: 703.829.6732), and a search bar. The navigation menu includes Home, About, Custom Projects, The Method, Our Tools, Clients, Portfolio, Testimonials, Appearances, Contact Us, and Blog. The main content area features the article 'Due Diligence Test Panel' with a date of November 20, 2010. The article includes two rows of three images each, showing a woman with various expressions. Below the images is a question: 'Are you getting the reaction you want out there? Let us help you find out.' The article text explains that raising environmental awareness is crucial for success and that the test panel helps predict public reactions. The right sidebar contains 'Recent Posts' and 'Comments' sections with links to various articles.

Due Diligence Test Panel
[Water Words That Work, LLC | November 20, 2010 - 8:23 pm](#)

Are you getting the reaction you want out there? Let us help you find out.

Raising environmental awareness — raising money, influencing conservation policy, and encouraging environmentally friendly lifestyles — is crucial to your success! So why guess at how the public will react to your message?

Recent Posts

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- [Environmental Message Method: Revised!](#)

Comments

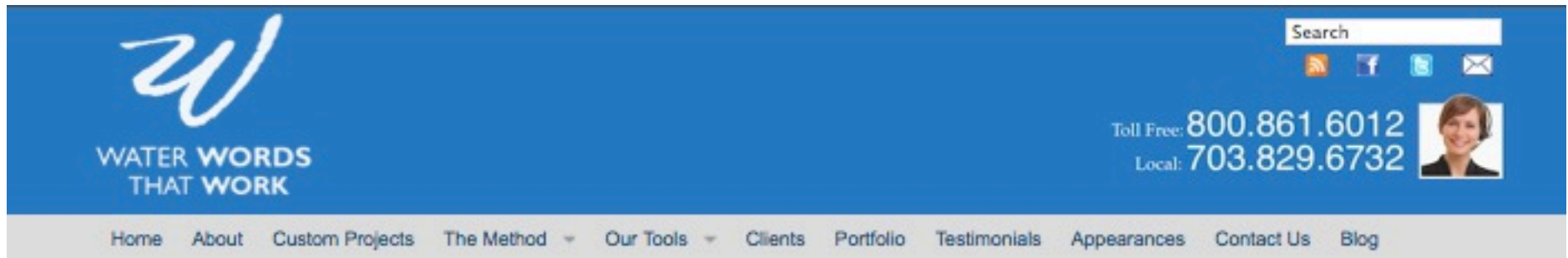
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- [Lynne Richard on When Words Become The Pictures](#)
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- [Sandra Diaz on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)

Categories
Select Category

Archive
Select Month

A research tool that measures how everyday citizens will react to a message from you

Step One: Begin with Behavior



WATER WORDS
THAT WORK

Search

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Step One: Begin With Behavior

Environmental awareness — that's often the goal of the communications efforts of the conservation community. We imagine a world where enlightened individuals consider how all of their daily choices affect the natural world.

But how do we get there? One step at a time — so we should organize all our environmental communications around promoting that next step for our audience. Consider the two photos below. At first glance, they're similar. But the sign on the left is better environmental communication because it has a call to action — and then conveys an important fact to support the request. The sign on the right conveys only a fact, but leaves the reader to draw their own conclusion about what to do.



Recent Posts

- [EPA Updates Its Outreach Toolbox](#)
- [Free Webinar: "Your Website Doesn't Matter. Why Email Still Rules Fundraising"](#)
- [When Words Become The Pictures](#)
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- [Environmental Message Method: Revised!](#)

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- [Lynne Richard on When Words Become The Pictures](#)
- [Carlton Krumpfes on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)
- [Sandra Diaz on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)

Step One: Begin with Behavior

- 1. Personal Behavior:** Scooping the poop, new lawn care habits, household water and energy conservation, etc.
- 2. Political Behavior:** Boycotting a bad company, signing a petition, attending a hearing, writing an official, etc.
- 3. Charitable Behavior:** Donating time or money, writing a group into their will, participating in a walk-a-thon or other charity event.

Step One: Begin with Behavior

5. Please rate the following statements about the desired outcome. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The piece makes it clear what I can do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident others would do their part	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident my action would make a difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please elaborate on your answer to the last statement about "making a difference:" *

The Test Panel rates materials this way...

Step One: Begin with Behavior



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line

Low Scores for Step One

- There was so much garbage shown and the damage was so big that it gave me pause.
Would what I could do really help stop all that horrible waste?
- I think I'm to avoid runoff of some sort but **am not clear on what I can do** that actually closes a beach or makes a fish sneeze.
- **The actions of one person alone do not really add up to much...**

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Step One: Begin with Behavior



Press *6 to mute or unmute your line



High Scores for Step One

- If i contribute by planting a tree or just doing small things **i can make a difference** in my community and decrease the affect on water pollution.
- One person's actions make a difference in the total pollution problem. **If one person's actions are multiplied by the actions of many people**, then **together thay can make a huge difference** in the total polluton problem.
- Knowing that small actions can make a big difference is **very motivational**. And the video provides ways for someone to easily do that.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Education vs. Action



Goal: \$500.00

Achieved: \$0.00

Education vs. Action

July 21, 2008, 5:35 pm

Protest at Radio Station Over Autism Comments

By SEWELL CHAN



Todd Shapiro, right, took part in a protest outside WOR's office in Lower Manhattan over Michael Savage's comments about autism. Councilmen David I. Weprin, left, and Eric N. Giola, center, also demonstrated.

(Photo: Patrick Andrade for The New York Times)

Education vs. Action

Is my child Autistic? ...



Watch for Red flags of Autism in your child

The following red flags may indicate a child is at risk for atypical development, and is in need of an immediate evaluation.

- ▶ No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by 6 months
- ▶ No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by 9 months
- ▶ No babbling by 12 months
- ▶ Avoids eye contact
- ▶ Trouble forming relationships
- ▶ Difficulty using language
- ▶ Doesn't respond to emotional signals

Discussion/Exercise #2

Read the article highlighted on the right.

Come up with some examples of:

- Personal Behaviors
- Charitable Behaviors
- Political Behaviors

That are relevant to this piece.

Schuylkill Project

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Lofty Creek in the headwaters of the Little Schuylkill River



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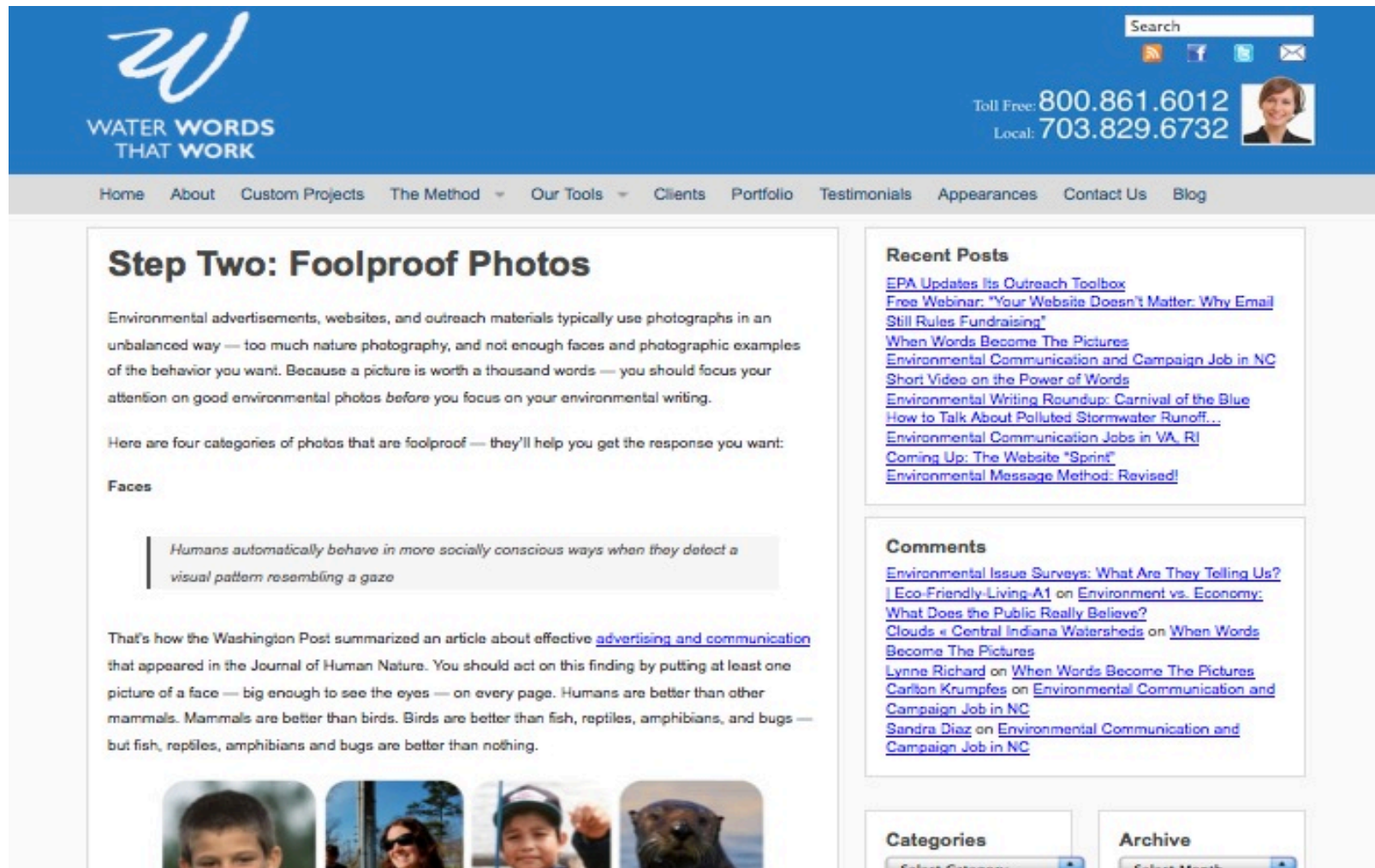
Damselfly adult

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Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, search bar, and contact information. The main content area features the article title 'Step Two: Foolproof Photos' and a paragraph explaining the importance of using photos with human faces. A quote from the Washington Post is highlighted in a box. Below the text are four small images: a young boy, a woman, a child, and a dog. The right sidebar contains sections for 'Recent Posts' and 'Comments' with various article links.

WATER WORDS THAT WORK

Home About Custom Projects The Method Our Tools Clients Portfolio Testimonials Appearances Contact Us Blog

Step Two: Foolproof Photos


Environmental advertisements, websites, and outreach materials typically use photographs in an unbalanced way — too much nature photography, and not enough faces and photographic examples of the behavior you want. Because a picture is worth a thousand words — you should focus your attention on good environmental photos *before* you focus on your environmental writing.

Here are four categories of photos that are foolproof — they'll help you get the response you want:

Faces

Humans automatically behave in more socially conscious ways when they detect a visual pattern resembling a gaze

That's how the Washington Post summarized an article about effective [advertising and communication](#) that appeared in the Journal of Human Nature. You should act on this finding by putting at least one picture of a face — big enough to see the eyes — on every page. Humans are better than other mammals. Mammals are better than birds. Birds are better than fish, reptiles, amphibians, and bugs — but fish, reptiles, amphibians and bugs are better than nothing.



Recent Posts

- [EPA Updates its Outreach Toolbox](#)
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- [When Words Become The Pictures](#)
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- [Sandra Diaz](#) on [Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)

Categories:

Archive:

Step Two: Find Foolproof Photos

7. Please rate the following statements about the images. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The images get my attention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The images demonstrate what I can do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The images show how my actions make a difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the images in this piece: *

Low Scores for Step Two

- Showing a couple of pictures of fish and a bald eagle doesn't really tell me much about how my efforts would make a difference.
- Two men shaking hands and what looks like a woman hiding behind a tree. Not impressed.
Let's see some action!
- I actually had to go back and look at the pictures since I didn't remember a thing about them- so they really weren't attention grabbing.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

High Scores for Step Two

- I think the **photos** are relevant and appealing but **should be larger, cut down the text a bit to make room.**
- It shows the causes of pollution and also what I can do as a citizen. **It wouldn't hurt to put another picture.**
- The images show how people of all ages and skills can help save the river, from children to skilled workers and experts who pitch in and get their hands dirty

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Faces



Good Pictures!

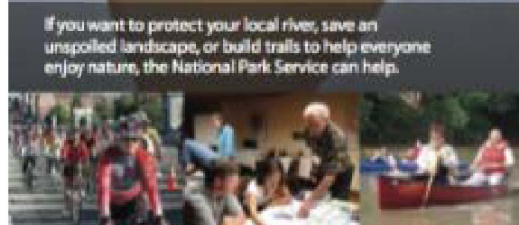
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Community Assistance
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Want to connect your
community to nature?
We can help.



If you want to protect your local river, save an unspoiled landscape, or build trails to help everyone enjoy nature, the National Park Service can help.



The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program specialists can help you to:

- Connect with partners
- Assess ideas and options
- Create workable plans
- Locate funding
- Achieve your vision!

We've helped in hundreds of communities nationwide, where neighbors are working together to create greener, healthier communities for the future.

To find out whether we can help you make a difference where you live, just get in touch:

202-354-6900
nps_rtca@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/rtca



Bad Pictures!



Jane Goodall Knows



“Monkey See,
Monkey Do”

Monkey See, Monkey Do



Monkey See, Monkey Do



A Common Mistake



All the soap, scum, and oily grit runs along the curb. Then into a storm drain and directly into our lakes, rivers, and streams. And that causes pollution which is unhealthy for everyone. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy! Wash your car on the grass or gravel instead of the street. Or better yet, take it to a car wash where the water gets treated or recycled.

Foolproof Photos

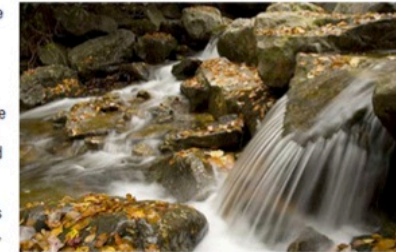


Discussion/Exercise #3

If you could replace some of the images on the right, what would you replace them with?

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Mayfly larva on stream bottom

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Damselfly adult


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Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk





 Toll Free: 800.861.6012
 Local: 703.829.6732
 

[Home](#) [About](#) [Custom Projects](#) [The Method](#) [Our Tools](#) [Clients](#) [Portfolio](#) [Testimonials](#) [Appearances](#) [Contact Us](#) [Blog](#)

Step Three: Swap Shop Talk

When it comes to raising environmental awareness among everyday citizens, professional vocabulary like "riparian," "watershed," and "impervious surface" is an obstacle. The more you throw words like these at everyday citizens, the less confident and comfortable they will feel about their ability to [make a difference](#).

Trying to use environmental advertisements and outreach materials to teach new vocabulary is generally a bad idea. Adults learn, on average, less than one new word per week. When presented with a vocabulary lesson, many will perceive that as a situation that makes them feel stupid and that they want to avoid.

Step three of the Water Words That Work message method is to swap out your shop talk and replace it with plain English. You'll give up some nuance and precision — but you'll also get more agreement, action, and cooperation — and that leads to environmental awareness.

And here are some examples of [nature protection](#) and [pollution control](#) "shop talk." The more you use them, the more people you will exclude from the conversation. Click the link for citations on the shortcomings of these terms.

If you are wondering about a term that is not on the list below, put it to the shop talk test — could your mother define the term for a stranger without your help. If yes, you can leave the word in. If not, take it out and replace it with something easier to understand.

Words With Documented Shortcomings

Term	Issue	Try Substituting...
Alternative	Clean and safe energy	

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- [Sandra Diaz on Environmental Communication and Campaign Job in NC](#)

Categories

Select Category

Archive

Select Month

Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk

9. Please rate the following statements about the message. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The piece has a clear message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could explain this piece to others without showing it to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The piece was prepared with the general public in mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How would you describe the audience this piece is intended for? *

Low Scores for Step Three

- it is written for... someone a lot **smarter than i**
- ...it is **not** written in an interesting or **easy to understand** manner for the general public.
- It gives the facts in a **dry** and clear way but it is **not exciting**...

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)



High Scores for Step Three

- This piece is intended for everyone. It is a simple piece with impact-full text and pictures **showing how the average person can make a difference.**
- This piece was clearly intended for a general audience. It was easy to read and informative. It clearly **spelled out what we can do to help** and offered a template and a way to actually support the plan of action.
- It's for people who will write letters, sign petitions, get out and **get involved**

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Step Three: Swap the Shoptalk



The Grandmother Test: Can you imagine your grandmother using this term correctly in conversation?

If not, it's shoptalk.
Swap it out!

**A: Watershed
management**

**B: Land and water
conservation**

A: Open Space

B: Natural Area

A: Polluted Runoff

B: Stormwater

A: Clean water

B: Water Quality

Discussion/Exercise #4

Swap this shoptalk:

- Benthic macroinvertebrates
- Watershed health assessment
- Stream mitigation

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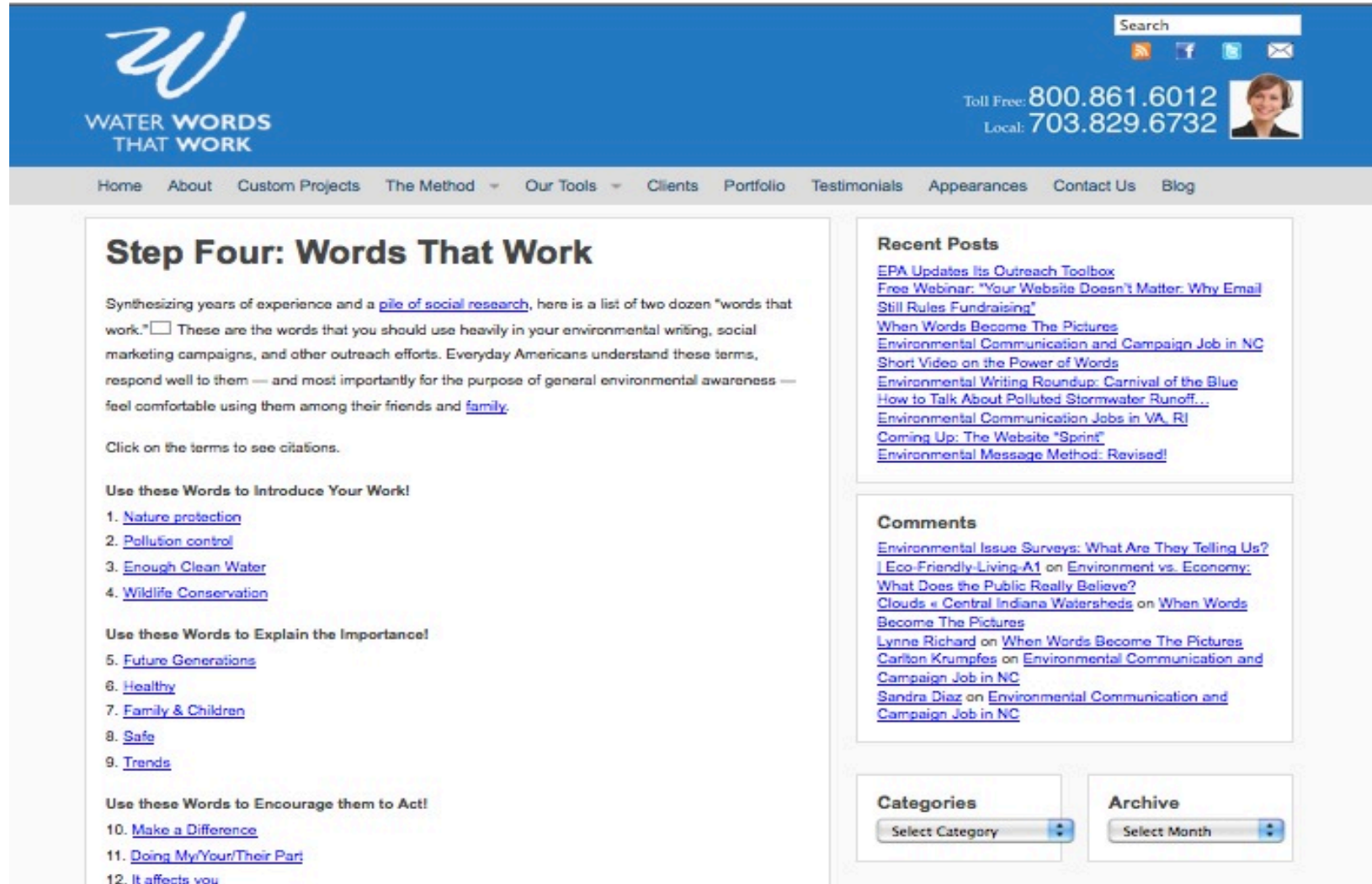
Damselfly adult

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Step Four: Words That Work



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, search bar, and contact information. The main content area features the title 'Step Four: Words That Work' and a paragraph explaining the purpose of the list. Below this are three sections: 'Use these Words to Introduce Your Work!', 'Use these Words to Explain the Importance!', and 'Use these Words to Encourage them to Act!'. Each section contains a numbered list of 12 terms. The right sidebar includes 'Recent Posts', 'Comments', 'Categories', and 'Archive'.

WATER WORDS THAT WORK

Search

Toll Free: 800.861.6012
Local: 703.829.6732

Home About Custom Projects The Method Our Tools Clients Portfolio Testimonials Appearances Contact Us Blog

Step Four: Words That Work

Synthesizing years of experience and a [pile of social research](#), here is a list of two dozen "words that work." □ These are the words that you should use heavily in your environmental writing, social marketing campaigns, and other outreach efforts. Everyday Americans understand these terms, respond well to them — and most importantly for the purpose of general environmental awareness — feel comfortable using them among their friends and [family](#).

Click on the terms to see citations.

Use these Words to Introduce Your Work!

1. [Nature protection](#)
2. [Pollution control](#)
3. [Enough Clean Water](#)
4. [Wildlife Conservation](#)

Use these Words to Explain the Importance!

5. [Future Generations](#)
6. [Healthy](#)
7. [Family & Children](#)
8. [Safe](#)
9. [Trends](#)

Use these Words to Encourage them to Act!

10. [Make a Difference](#)
11. [Doing My/Your/Their Part](#)
12. [It affects you](#)

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Categories

Select Category

Archive

Select Month

Step Four: Words That Work

11. Please rate the following statements about the issue generally. *

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The issue is important to society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is urgent to address this issue now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issues like this affect me or my family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Please elaborate on your thoughts about the last statement, "issues like this affect me or my family." *

High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that affects water and quality of the land affects me, my family and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an adequate water supply for our present and future needs affects nearly everyone.
- If we want to make the world better for future generations we need to address these issues and work together to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

High Scores for Step Four

- Anything that **affects water** and quality of the land **effects me, my family** and everyone else.
- Making sure there is an **adequate water supply** for our present and **future** needs **affects nearly everyone**.
- If we want to **make the world better** for **future generations** we need to address these issues and **work together** to fix them.

(Typos and spelling are verbatim)

Discussion/Exercise #5

Rewrite the first paragraph of this piece.

Begin with Behavior:
Add a call to action.

Swap the shoptalk.

Insert the words that work.

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Damselfly adult

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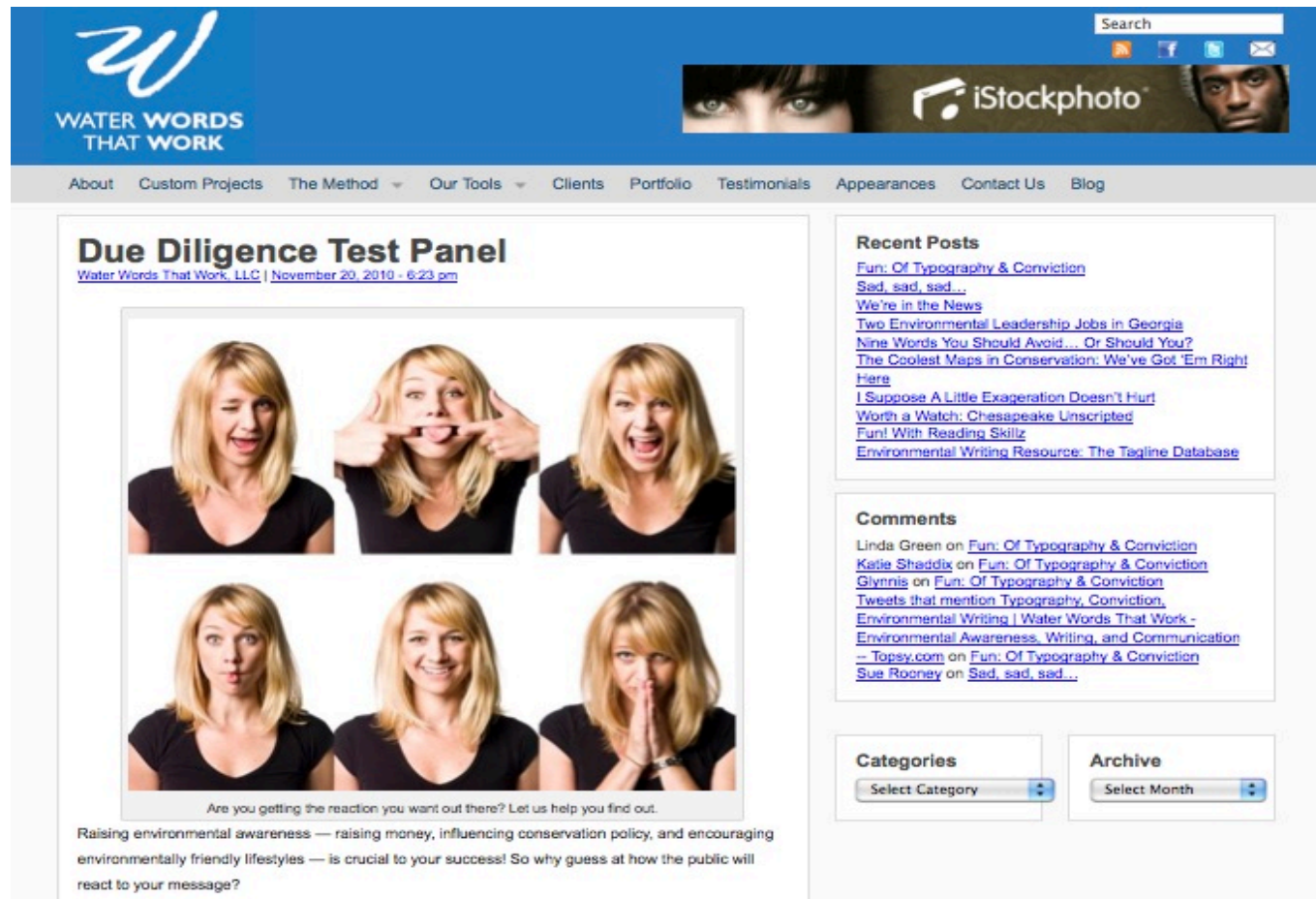
Rules of Thumb



About 1% of the words in your piece should come from the "Words That Work" list.

Use them in Titles, headlines, photo captions, quotes, and other high profile areas.

Try It Yourself!



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo, a search bar, and social media icons. The main content area features a blog post titled "Due Diligence Test Panel" with a date of November 20, 2010. The post includes two rows of three images of a woman with blonde hair, each showing a different facial expression. Below the images is a caption: "Are you getting the reaction you want out there? Let us help you find out." The post text discusses the importance of raising environmental awareness and understanding public reactions. To the right, there are sections for "Recent Posts" with links to various articles, "Comments" with user feedback, and "Categories" and "Archive" dropdown menus.

Use the Due Diligence Test Panel to improve your next draft!
Just \$199 for nonprofits, just \$249 for everybody else.
Sign up online at <http://waterwordsthatwork.com>