

AMERICAN RIVERS

Stormwater Messaging Tutorial



EXERCISE 2

Message Context and Theme

- ❖ Use the following themes and questions to begin thinking which concept(s) might resonate well with local leaders to explain why preventing polluted stormwater runoff with innovative, green infrastructure practices and policies should be a priority because it addresses a common goal or desire.
- ❖ Remember that you're aiming for a message that lies at the overlap between the action that you're advocating for and the desires and needs of the audience you must persuade.
- ❖ Please note that this list is NOT meant to be exhaustive — use it as a starting point to generate other ideas that might work in your area.

1. **Is flooding a problem in your community? Is this a priority problem for your audience?**

a. **What is the nature of flooding in your community?**

- i. Number of floods, frequency of floods?
- ii. Cause of floods – overdevelopment, natural causes?
- iii. Results of floods – i.e. property loss, erosion, damage of natural or cultural resources, problems with sewer systems.

- b. Describe the nature and effects of flooding in your community:

- c. **LINK TO SOLUTION:** explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will mitigate flooding.

2. Is your community on a centralized sewer system that experience overflows and spills? Is this a priority problem for your audience?

- a. Is your community served by a sewer system that overflows or spills in local waterways or public areas?
 - i. Do people play, swim, paddle, or wade in waters where spills occur?

 - ii. Do people eat fish and other seafood from waters where spills occur?

- b. Describe how there could be adverse health effects from sewage overflows caused by too much stormwater runoff entering the sewage system and causing sewage spills.

- c. **LINK TO YOUR SOLUTION:** explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will reduce raw sewage from getting into local waters, playgrounds, homes, etc.

3. **Are current trends in sprawling, poorly planned growth going to cost local governments more in providing services than they will generate in revenues? Is this a priority problem for your audience?**
 - a. **LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will save your community money by better directing growth and preserving features to provide environmental resilience.**

4. **Is your community's "legacy" or "community identity" under threat from poorly-planned development? Is this a priority problem for your audience?**
 - a. **How is your community's identity being changed by poorly-planned development?**
 - i. What is the pace of development?
 - ii. What types of development are you seeing?
 - b. **What characteristics or specific resources have been lost or are threatened?**
 - c. **How is development changing the visual nature of your community?**
 - d. **LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure is a solution to preserving community character by protecting certain features that help define your community.**

5. Is your community served by a centralized drinking water system that is at risk of pollution? Is this a priority problem for your audience?

a. If the system is served by surface water (streams and rivers), is poorly planned development causing polluted stormwater runoff to pollute these waterways?

- i. If yes, link to solution: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure can reduce drinking water treatment costs by keeping water clean.

b. If the system is fed by groundwater wells, is poorly planned development causing depletion of groundwater, causing less infiltration and recharge?

- i. IF YES, LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will protect groundwater resources by promoting infiltration and recharge by better maintaining the natural water cycle.

6. **Is your community under a regulatory mandate (state or federal) to provide cleaner water? Is this a priority problem for your audience?**
 - a. **Are any of your local waterways listed as “impaired” – meaning they don’t meet their Clean Water Act standards (also called designated uses...)**
 - b. **Are there other state requirements that require your local leaders to do more for clean water?**
 - c. **IF ANY OF THESE ARE IN PLACE, LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure can help achieve these clean water results cost effectively.**

7. **Is water-based recreation important to your community’s character, quality of life, and/or tourism economy? Is it under threat and is this a priority problem for your audience?**
 - a. **How does recreational use relate to quality of life in your community; are people attracted to live in the area for boating, fishing, swimming?**
 - b. **How water-based recreation support local tourism economies?**

c. **How does polluted water/beach closures/fish consumption advisories affect water based recreation? Are people getting sick from being in the water or worried about going in the water?**

d. **LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will help preserve water-based recreation by providing clean water and a better, healthier experience.**

8. Is clean water a key part of a thriving local economy and is it under threat? Is this a priority problem for your audience?

a. **Are there many jobs associated with clean water – e.g. fishing guides, watermen, tourism industry.**

b. **LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure will help preserve a vibrant water-based economy by cost-effectively providing clean water.**

9. Is your community's open space under threat or does your community need more greenspace? Is this a priority problem for your audience?

a. How does open space/greenspace benefit your community?

b. LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure is a solution to protecting or adding open space.

10. Is the uncertainty associated with climate change and its effect on water resources making it difficult to plan for the future of water management?

a. Are predictions in your area for more droughts or floods, change in rainfall patterns or snowpack?

b. How could using decentralized and flexible green infrastructure practices help buffer the change in weather patterns by reducing the burden on existing hard infrastructure?

c. LINK TO SOLUTION: explain how your action/better control of stormwater/use of green infrastructure is a solution to managing in an uncertain climate.

