



national **get outdoors** day

COMMUNICATIONS and OUTREACH

The overall success and attendance of your event can hinge on “getting the word out” adequately. Get the specifics of your event out to the appropriate audience in time for them to make use of the information. They will need to know this basic information:

1. What is the event all about – what are you proposing to do?
2. Why are you doing this – what is your purpose?
3. Where is it going to be held?
4. When is it going to be held (date, time, length of event, etc.)?
5. Who is sponsoring the event and where can participants find more information?
6. Most importantly, ***why is this your event something young people and families will want to attend?***

Make use of your local newspapers, radio, TV stations and the internet, but don't forget to utilize partner newsletters, eNewsletters, websites, magazines and similar publications. Posters and fliers can also be valuable communication tools, as can networking with schools, scouts, 4-H Clubs and other similar groups. Finally, utilize both traditional online marketing tools (websites) and contemporary online marketing tools (social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace or Twitter).

CREATE A WORKABLE TIMELINE

Timing is crucial when planning your communication strategy for National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day). Consult your local media outlets for their specific deadlines to create your media time line. For inclusion in a community calendar, six to eight weeks notice is typical. TV and radio stations also need notice several weeks in advance. To reinforce your message, provide a media advisory ***one week before the day***.

- Alert the public of the day and location, ***one to two months in advance***, by sending a community calendar entry and emailing an announcement to your email list, partners' email lists and local community listservs. Check with your local media for specific deadlines and submission information.

- Mail or email your media materials **one to two months in advance of the day**. Customize each piece for each recipient.
- **One to two months out**, enlist the help of bloggers, college or high school students and others in your area to organize an online campaign to get the word out about your GO Day event. Have them utilize their websites, blogs and social networking sites. Get as many people involved as possible.
- **One week before your event**, fax or email your media advisory to all contacts.
- **Three days in advance of the event**, make follow-up calls to television and newspaper assignment editors to pitch the event.
- **Also three days before the event**, send a reminder email to all email lists, Facebook and MySpace groups/contacts and have bloggers post a reminder. Encourage folks to “tweet” about your event on Twitter.
- **The day before the event**, send the advisory again and call contacts not yet reached.
- **The morning of the event**, call again to find out which media are attending.
- **After the event**, send a press release out to all contacts about your successful GO Day event!

BUILD A MEDIA LIST

Build a media list the same way you build your partner network. Begin your search by looking in your local phone book, checking Web portals like Yahoo and Google and investigating Bacon’s Media Guide and the News Media Yellow Book at your local library. Make calls, keep records and send follow-up emails after each call. You will have different contacts for radio, television and newspapers.

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| <u>TV</u> | At local affiliates of both national and cable news stations, contact news anchors and reporters, assignment editors, producers of the stations’ morning and mid-day talk shows, community calendar editor and public service director. |
| <u>Radio</u> | Contact the news directors, assignment desk staff, radio personalities, producers of the stations’ morning talk shows and the public service directors. Be cautious about approaching “shock jock” stations that may not handle your news in a tasteful manner. |
| <u>Print</u> | Contact magazine editors, newspaper lifestyle or feature reporters, metro section editors, photo desk editors, community calendar editors and public service directors. At smaller daily or weekly newspapers, ask for the name, address and phone and fax numbers of the managing editor or special sections editor. Also, contact the daybook editor at your local AP affiliate found at http://www.ap.org/pages/contact/contact.html |
| <u>Web</u> | Do a little research into websites that have clout in your area and reach out to them. Community or area specific sites (such as www.boston.com) are often willing to post banners or ads for local events, blog posts talking about the event or even a special eBlast to their members/subscribers. |

DEVELOP A PITCH

A pitch is a brief, succinct message that informs the media why your National Get Outdoors Day event is newsworthy, interesting to the community and timely. This message is reflected in all areas of your media campaign from your media advisories to interviews.

DEVELOP MEDIA CONTENT

If you are interested in and have the means to develop media content for your GO Day event, these tools will help you look professional while talking to media sources and will also improve the chances that your story will be picked up; the more work you do means the less work media sources have to do! Use the GO Day logos provided on www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org. Find a photographer who can take some stock photos for you. Work with a film crew to put together a B roll. Often graphic designers, photographers and film crews will donate their time to help you and build their portfolio. Look for locals who have an interest in their community. Your local high school or college campus is another good place to look for people who will donate their time and skill to develop media content.

WRITE A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Public Service Announcements are a cost-efficient way to recruit volunteers and inform the community about your GO Day event. It is important to keep your message brief! Be sure to include important contact information. Television and radio stations may provide free airtime for public service organizations. Contact the public service director at your local TV and radio stations well in advance to find out their guidelines (i.e., preferred length and format). Some local cable providers such as Comcast offer free community programming and announcements on their websites or even allow for mini interviews as part of their community relations outreach between regular programming.

FAX OR EMAIL A MEDIA ADVISORY

Approximately one week before your GO Day event, you should fax a media advisory to everyone on your media contact list. This is a helpful way to keep your event fresh in the mind of your contacts. Your advisory should be brief and specific, detailing key pieces of information — who, what, when, where, why — and important contact information. A template can be found at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org.

WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

A press release is an article written by you or your organization that provides details about your event, the goals of the service day and participants' contact information. It enables reporters to easily write a story about your event. Press releases can be written before your GO Day event to attract participants, for example, or they can be written after the event to highlight the event's impact on the community. A template can be found at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org.

PLACE FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALLS

After submitting PSAs, media advisories and press releases, place phone calls to editors and reporters to remind them of your event. When calling a newspaper, ask for the city desk. When calling radio or television stations, ask for an assignment editor in the newsroom. This direct contact ensures receipt of information and gives you the opportunity to answer any further questions they may have.

CONSIDER WRITING AN OP-ED

The editorial page has wide reader base. An op-ed or a letter to the editor should highlight how your event ties in with current trends or issues and include some of the key messages related to topics such as volunteering, the health benefits of outdoor recreation or the need to reconnect children with the great outdoors.

UTILIZE THE TRADITIONAL WEB

Make sure that you have a banner or an ad for your event with the date and location on your website and your partners' websites. If your staff or volunteers (or even your family) have personally websites, ask them to put up a similar banner or ad. You might want to work with a graphic designer to create one.

UTILIZE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook make it easy to find people in your community. Create a MySpace and Facebook group, page and event and invite people who live within a reasonable distance of your event's location. If you have no idea what is or how to set up a MySpace or Facebook page, enlist the help of some local high school or college students. If your target audience is young people, use young people to reach out to them. You can also encourage your network to "tweet" about the excitement of GO Day on Twitter.

SELECT A SPOKESPERSON

Identify 1-2 staff people or partners who are willing and able to communicate with the press. Consider using a young person, such as a student from your local high school in addition to a staff person. The media is often interested in passionate and eloquent young people, so it may make them more likely to run your story. The media are highly attracted to real-life examples, especially when it pertains to "feel good" stories like connecting kids with nature. Use the following guidelines to help determine whom to consider as your GO Day spokesperson:

- A willingness to speak in public and in front of the media
- An understanding of (or a willingness to learn about) the basic benefits, goals and messages of National Get Outdoors Day
- Time to complete media interviews in advance and during the day, including over the phone, at the host site and in-studio
- Most importantly, passion for the goals of National Get Outdoors Day

When conducting television interviews, or on-the-spot newspaper interviews where photos will be taken, please make sure that you and your cooperators are wearing some type of identifying uniform, cap or patch so the public can associate each person with their respective government agency or organization.

Be prepared with good facts and details about the event, its partners and planned activities. Become familiar with key quotes and facts about the GO Day ahead of time.

ENGAGE A LOCAL CELEBRITY

Your first and most impressive celebrities are the families who show up and participate in the GO Day event together. However, GO Day also provides a great opportunity to invite a well-known local person and his/her family to participate and help spread the word. Seek people who have high visibility and stellar reputations within your community. Remember, you are inviting them to involve their families also — spouses, children, grandchildren and other relatives or friends. Some suggestions include:

- Mayors or other well-known elected officials
- Sports figures (NFL, MLB or NBA players or college athletes)
- Civic/community/business leaders
- Entertainers
- Media personalities (although this could cause a “black out” of coverage by the other radio or television stations)

SECURE A PROCLAMATION

A proclamation from your mayor, county official or governor adds credibility and significance for all the work and effort you’ve put forth. Several state proclamations of June as Great Outdoors Month which mention National Get Outdoors Day have already been collected and can be seen at <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/2284>.

Below are some tips for securing a proclamation:

- Call the mayor’s office (governor or other official) and determine the name of the person who handles proclamations for your jurisdiction.
- Send a letter requesting a proclamation to the contact person or directly to your mayor, county official or governor. Submit supporting materials with the letter such as a fact sheet or news release on National Get Outdoors Day
- Follow up with a phone call to the contact person to find out if the request was received, whether additional information is needed and a time frame for when to expect the completed proclamation.
- Send a thank you to the official and/or contact person once you have received the proclamation.
- Frame your proclamation and visibly display it at your GO Day event!

POSTERS & FLIERS

Posters can be made and displayed at strategic locations in local communities or towns. The National Get Outdoors Day logo, sample posters and instructions on how to create inexpensive posters can be downloaded for your use on www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org. Keep your expenses down. Don't go overboard, since this advertising route is not as effective as personal contact.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

It is more labor intensive, but you cannot beat the old time-tested method of public presentations. Not only does it add a personal touch, but it provides an opportunity to field questions and distribute registration forms and informational material about your GO Day event. Potential audiences would include: local school groups and PTAs, 4-H clubs, vocational agriculture classes, biology/science classes, scouts (Tiger Cubs, Boy and Girl Scouts), conservation groups and civic clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, garden clubs, etc.).

PHOTOGRAPHY and VIDEOGRAPHY

Make sure someone takes plenty of photos during the event—posed and candid. Identify one individual whose job is simply to make sure that he/she takes documents the event with photos or videos.

Don't be bashful about setting up staged photos—particularly with characters or local celebrities. Quite often you have to set the stage so that your photos tell the story that you want. Pay careful attention to light and background distractions.

Make sure to show young people doing things. Include your coordinators in as many photos as possible so no one feels left out. If the local newspaper gets some good photos, ask them to share copies for your use. When taking photos, make sure to get the names of people in the photos.

You should always obtain a release form for anyone whose picture you take. It is particularly important to get a release form signed by a parent or guardian if you take photos or video of people under 18. Also, be sure to have your photographers and/or videographers sign a media release form so you have the right to use everything that they capture.

POST-EVENT PUBLICITY

Last but not least, do not forget post-event publicity! Your advertising job is not completed until you “put the icing on the cake” with some good post-event publicity. Doing a good job at this can grease the wheel for next year's event by elevating it to a higher level of demand, motivating young people to want to come next year, and providing a greater degree of credibility to your event in the eyes of local businesses and potential contributors for subsequent events.

Submit articles for publication to outside sources such as publications from your cooperators. Let the public know what you and your cooperators have been doing!

MEDIA TIMELINE

INFORMATION PIECE	FUNCTION	WHO RECEIVES IT?	WHEN SHOULD YOU SEND IT?
Pitch Letter	Written sales tool, used to peak interest in your event	Photo desk editor (newspaper) Feature reporter (newspaper) Community Affairs Department (radio and TV) Editor (magazine) TV/radio talk show producer	-2 months before event -include in Media Kit
Media Advisory	Offers essential information of event and details of what, who, where, when, why	Same as above	-1 week before event
News Release	Generates interest, often becomes the first three paragraphs of the article	Same as above	-resend 1 week before event -post on your website -include in Media Kit
Fact Sheet	Provides background information like facts and figures to help reporters build a story	Send as requested	-post on your website -include in Media Kit
Community Calendar Entry	Short, concise entry for calendar	Community calendar editor (newspaper) Community Affairs Department (TV and radio)	-2 months before event -post on your website
Public Service Announcement (PSA) Reader Scripts	Brief script delivered to radio and TV to be read on the air	Community Affairs Department (TV and radio)	-1 month before