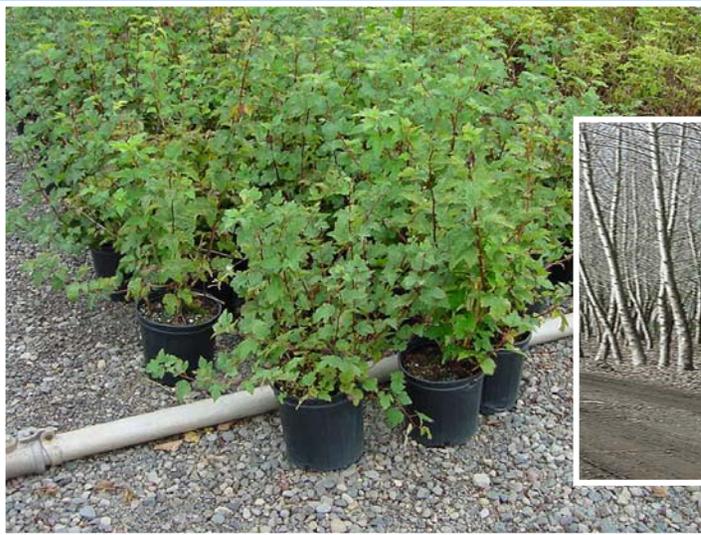


Using Public Involvement as a Proactive Strategy for Reuse Programs



By Jeanna Cernazanu
Public Involvement Coordinator
Clean Water Services

Wherever there's water, there's Clean Water.

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Overview of Presentation

- Barriers to public acceptance
- Building trust and credibility
- Tools for involving the community
- Clean Water Services example
- Strategies for success



Barriers to public acceptance

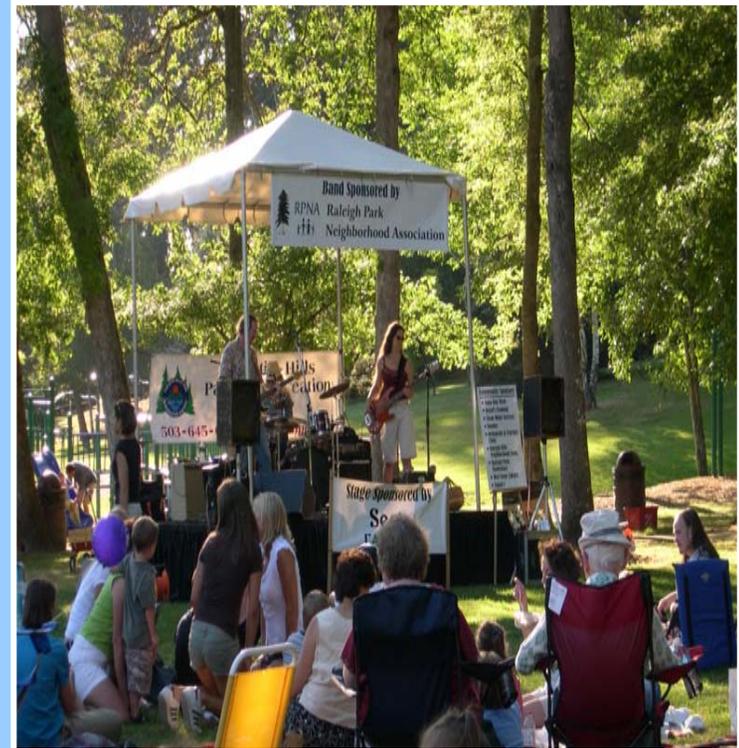
- Lack of trust among the public and stakeholders
- Lack of understanding about reclaimed water
- Lack of understanding about health and safety
- Lack of adequate investment in communication/public involvement

Common public concerns about safety

- Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Personal care products
 - Metals
 - Pesticides, herbicides, fungicides
- Pathogens
- Odor
- Surface water and groundwater quality
- Monitoring and enforcement

Role of Public Involvement

Public involvement is a key ingredient in planning a successful reclaimed water program



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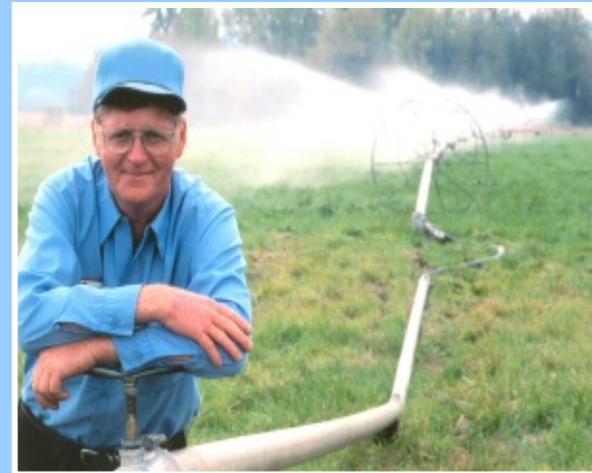
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Building Relationships with the Community

- Who are the key stakeholders for reuse planning?
 - Internal staff
 - Neighbors
 - Customers (farmers, industry, parks, schools, cemeteries, etc.)
 - Citizen activists
 - Environmental groups (Sierra Club)

Building Relationships with the Community

- Who are the key stakeholders for reuse planning?
 - Media
 - Elected Officials
 - Regulatory agencies
 - Public Health Dept.
 - Watershed Councils



Building Relationships with the Community

- Engage the public EARLY in the process
- Emphasize the benefits
- Start with key stakeholders
- Identify and address obstacles and concerns
- Use the public's input to develop acceptable approaches



Building Relationships with the Community

- Techniques for identifying public values about reuse
 - Scientific surveys (telephone)
 - Focus groups
 - One-on-one interviews with key stakeholders
 - Advisory committees

Building trust and credibility

- Be up front and proactive
 - Honest and open dialogue
 - Reflective listening
 - Credible information
 - Empathetic staff
 - Respond to concerns and questions
 - Provide multiple ways for the community to be involved
 - Be inclusive of all who have an interest

Building Trust and Credibility

- Educate stakeholders
 - Explain water cycle and wastewater treatment process
 - History of reclaimed water in the US and other countries
 - Value of reclaimed water
 - Protecting public health and the environment
 - Regulatory safeguards, quality control



Building Trust and Credibility

- **Seeing is believing!**
 - Take potential customers or stakeholders on a tour of an existing program



Building Trust and Credibility

- Be an example of community pride and neighborliness
 - Are your facilities clean and well landscaped?
 - Are your vehicles well maintained?
 - Do employees believe in the mission of the organization?
 - Do you communicate with neighbors around the facility (newsletters and facility tours)?



Types of Communication

- Public relations
- Public Information
- Public education
- Public Involvement



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Tools for Involving the Community

- **Materials/venues**
 - Brochures or fact sheets
 - Q & A
 - Videos
 - Website information
 - Newsletters
 - Community access TV
 - Billing insert



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Tools for Involving the Community

- Public involvement methods
 - Public meeting
 - Open house
 - Steering Group
 - Committee
 - Tours
 - Briefings



Building Relationships with the Media

- **Working with the media**
 - Educate the media about your program before there is a controversy
 - Be proactive – offer tours and briefings
 - Help members of the media build awareness
 - The key to success is planning and preparation

Building Relationships with the Media

- Establish credibility and trust with the media
 - Respond to media calls immediately
 - Prepare well with key points and background for a story
 - Be honest and accurate
 - Use the correct formats for their needs
 - Direct them to other sources
 - Thank reporters for a good media story

Building Relationships with the Media

- Recognize constraints of relying on media for reuse education
 - Tension and conflict get more attention than consensus
 - Negative and sensational language gets more attention than positive
 - Immediate controversy gets more attention than long-term planning

Clean Water Services Example

- History of reuse programs
 - 1980's - users included two golf courses, a dairy farm, two high schools, landscaping firm, nursery
 - 1990's – Recycled Wastewater master plan developed with extensive public involvement:
 - recommended major expansion of reuse
 - irrigators wanted to participate
 - public concern emerged about drinking water contamination

Clean Water Services Example

- 1992 – USGS study of the Tualatin River determined cleaned wastewater was beneficial to the river
- 2000 – pipelines were constructed to connect two smaller facilities to larger advanced facility so all wastewater could be treated there during the summer and released into the river

Agency made decision to put water in the river for flow augmentation rather than expanding reuse



Clean Water Services Example

- Current reuse is about 5% of Level IV effluent from one advanced facility for summer irrigation;
 - 3 golf courses
 - 2 public school fields
 - a wetland, meadows and athletic field
 - District nursery

Total annual volume averages
75-100 million gallons



Clean Water Services Example

- 2004 – began Reclaimed Water Master Plan update and stakeholder participation using existing Clean Water Services advisory committee
- Advisory Committee had the following role:
 - develop public values for reclaimed water
 - review draft criteria for preferred plan
 - review draft alternatives
 - recommend additional public outreach as needed
 - review and make recommendation on final plan to Board of Directors

Clean Water Services Example

- Status of master plan
 - Four alternatives were reviewed by staff and advisory commission
 - Suggested alternative was to expand the urban area program by 2-5 mgd and incrementally add an agricultural program using an irrigation district pipeline.
 - Final decisions have not been made pending further evaluation of overall water quality management in the basin.

Strategies for Success

- Describe the benefits to the community/customer
- Understand public values and concerns
- Start small and slowly
- Find voluntary customers
- Involve key contacts and decision-makers early in the process
- Develop a public education program
- Use examples of successful programs

Public Acceptance

**the right water.....
at the right time.....
in the right place.**



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