



# Ten Easy Ways to Build Your Coalition ...Even on a Shoestring Budget

Is Teaming with Wildlife stuck on your back burner? It's not too late to get started building the coalition you need to support your state's wildlife action plan! Try these simple ideas from other states that have had success building their coalitions, even on shoestring budgets:

## 1. Integrate Teaming with Wildlife into your everyday work

Odds are, your everyday work brings you into contact with stakeholders, advisory committees, implementation partners, sportsmen's clubs, birders, outdoor educators, agency contractors and other potential members. Meetings with these engaged constituencies are ideal venues for coalition building! It's as simple as adding a slide to your PowerPoint, an endorsement form to the packet and a few words to your remarks. Don't limit yourself to presentations on your plan; states have had great success at sportsmen's expos, birding events and educational programs.

## 2. Ask 10 coalition members to gather 10 endorsements each

Setting a goal for existing members to gather endorsements is a great way to reach diverse constituencies and achieve our goal. Nevada set a goal for each core group member to gather 20 endorsements. In Nebraska everybody was given a list of targets with the option to opt-out "if you're too busy to make a 5 minute call"—so far nobody has. Wisconsin had success getting members to draft and distribute letters seeking endorsements from their constituencies (land trusts, river alliances, etc...). By engaging partners in coalition building, you can celebrate milestones together!

## 3. Get your co-workers to pitch in

Don't forget your co-workers are also passionate about wildlife! North Dakota was successful getting agency staff to volunteer stuffing outreach letters at lunchtime. This kind of informal gathering can be a great opportunity to introduce them to TWW and ask for their help with tip #1 by handing out endorsement forms at events and adding a slide on Teaming with Wildlife to their presentations. Sportsmen have always been the strongest supporters of Teaming with Wildlife; encourage your sportfish and game wildlife divisions to spread the word at their events!

## 4. Send endorsement letters to birding trail & other ecotourism partners

Alabama, Iowa and Nebraska have recruited convention and visitors bureaus through appeals tied to their birding trails. North Dakota has had great success with bed and breakfasts that cater to birders. Does your state have similar ventures? Tourism agencies and visitors bureaus make great partners because they're in the business of promoting the appeal of their region to the press. Since wildlife is part of that draw, they may be eager to co-host media field trips or other events. They also open the door to countless endorsements from tourism businesses.

## 5. Use your list to attract new members and reconnect with old ones

Your list of existing coalition members can be a powerful organizing tool! South Dakota got a great response from sending out a press release with the coalition list—both from old partners who ignored earlier letters but paid attention to the release and from new groups who wondered why they weren't included on such a "who's who" of conservation.

Teaming with Wildlife

A coalition of more than 5,000 groups working together to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered.

c/o Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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## 6. Discover the power of volunteers!

Teaming with Wildlife is a coalition of organizations and businesses, but the individual members of these groups are still important! When you give a presentation, don't just ask for the organization's endorsement; ask for volunteers to help build the coalition at events and seek endorsements from organizations and businesses in their community. Delaware, for instance, trained a group of volunteers to gather endorsements at the State Fair and they've been hearing from groups contacted there ever since. Engaging coalition members through volunteer activities can also give members easy goals and victories to celebrate in lieu of immediate legislative goals.

## 7. Seek endorsements from your grant recipients

If your state agency provides State Wildlife Grants funds to partners (whether through competitive grants or direct contracting), the recipients of these funds should be among the strongest supporters of the coalition. Nebraska is using the RFP it sends out for its re-granting process to remind applicants where State Wildlife Grants funding comes from. The Teaming with Wildlife Coalition created and continues to sustain their funding; encourage them to join!

## 8. Persuade agency leadership to get all staff engaged

Just a few words from Connecticut's Wildlife Division Director made them the fastest growing coalition earlier this year. He simply asked each staff member to contact two potential coalition members and keep following up until they joined. In the early years of Teaming with Wildlife, Arizona, Oregon and Missouri were among the largest coalitions due in large part to goals set by their agency directors. Missouri's director issued a call to action in the staff newsletter; you may be able to achieve similar results through all-staff emails.

## 9. Make sure your coalition's core group has some "worker bees"

Populating your coalition's core group with a diverse array of respected conservation leaders may be important to attracting coalition members and getting press coverage, but several states found it just as important to include mid-level organization staff and volunteers who have the time to tackle the nuts-and-bolts tasks of building an effective coalition. If it's unclear who is willing to step up and lend a helping hand, consider sending out the coalition toolkit's thank you letter and questionnaire ([www.teaming.com/tools/templates.html](http://www.teaming.com/tools/templates.html)) to your existing members. Those who respond are a self-selected pool of potential "worker bees" for your coalition.

## 10. Don't reinvent the wheel! Use the Coalition Toolkit!

Visit: [www.teaming.com/tools/](http://www.teaming.com/tools/)

The Teaming with Wildlife Coalition Toolkit, now updated online, is designed to make coalition building as easy as possible. You'll find templates for letters, articles, PowerPoints, resolutions and fact sheets along with step-by-step guides to building your coalition, launching a public education campaign and holding a wildlife summit. It's also a scrapbook of success stories from the first generation of Teaming with Wildlife and a place to share our successes as the next generation of Teaming with Wildlife takes flight!

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