

An underwater photograph showing submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV) plants with green leaves and stems. Two small, slender fish are swimming in the clear blue water. Sunlight rays penetrate the water from the surface, creating a bright, dappled light effect.

Speaking of SAV...

How to Develop and Implement a
Communications Strategy

SAV Workgroup Meeting

August 21, 2024

What is a Communications Strategy?

A communications strategy should answer these questions:

- What audience(s) should I reach?
- Why do I need to communicate to these specific audience(s)?
- What do I want my audience(s) to learn, or what action do I want them to take?
- What should my message say?
- How will I deliver these messages?



Background of issue, product, report, etc.

Communications objectives.

Audience(s).

Key messages tailored for each audience.

List of available communications channels.

Detailed schedule as to when each message should be delivered to each audience and through what mechanism.

List of trusted sources to communicate the message(s).

Potential challenges to be aware of.

Include performance measures to ensure your message(s) are being heard and/or action(s) is being taken.

**What does a
communications
strategy
include?**

Communications Successes

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In terms of communicating about SAV, what has worked best?

All responses to your question
will be shown here

Each response can be up to
200 characters long





What is the “Why”?

Do you want to...

- Provide information?
- Increase awareness?
- Encourage action?
- Build consensus?
- Change behavior?
- Promote community participation?
- Resolve conflict?
- Ask for input?

Why do you think you need an SAV communications strategy?

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 Mentimeter

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200 characters long

Turn on voting in Interactivity to
let participants vote for their
favorites





Defining your audiences

- Who is involved, affected, interested?
- Is there an obvious audience?
- Are there others that may be affected by reaching out to your target audience(s)?

Who do you think are the most important audience(s) you should be reaching?

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What audiences do you think should be engaged?



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Why is it important to tailor messages to different audiences?



Your audience is more likely to respond when the message is personalized.



Ensures your target audience understands what you are telling them/want them to do.



Utilize your trusted sources in understanding how your audience receives information and what they care about.



Frame messages in the context of what the audiences cares about, not what you want them to do or know.



You will need to adapt your messages for each audience in order to be successful.

Audience Exercise

A private landowner who thinks the SAV growing near her shoreline is an eyesore.

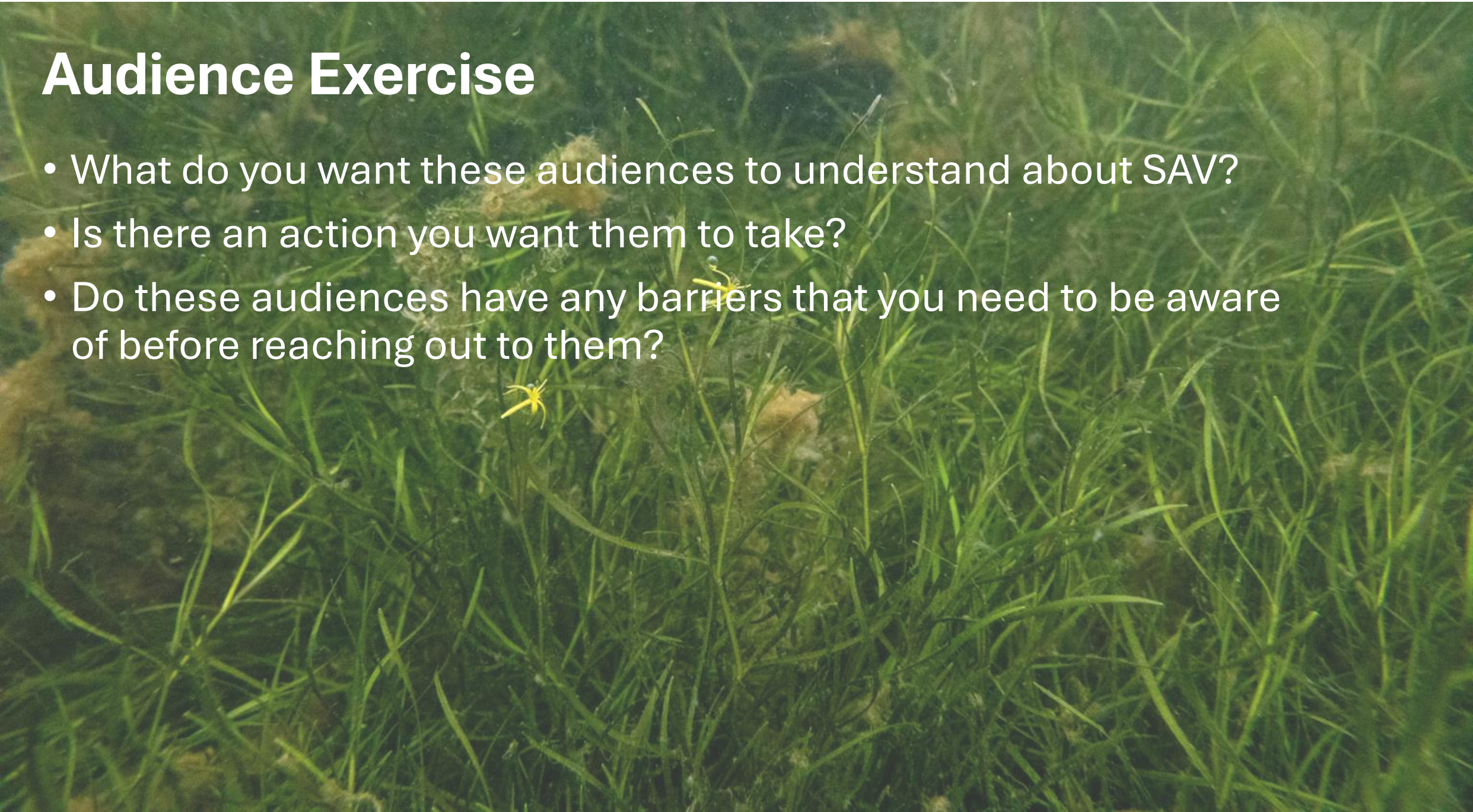
A marina owner who is getting complaints about SAV near the docks getting caught up in the motor of boats.

A neighborhood association whose residents are complaining that children won't swim on their community beach because SAV is growing offshore.

A policy-maker that doesn't live near the Bay, but whose support is integral in getting legislation passed that will provide additional funding for SAV restoration.

Audience Exercise

- What do you want these audiences to understand about SAV?
- Is there an action you want them to take?
- Do these audiences have any barriers that you need to be aware of before reaching out to them?



Trusted Sources

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Who is a trusted source that audiences would listen to?



iration focus leader
creative

Available Communications Channels

Articles/Editorials.

Blogs.

Case Studies.

Communication Professionals Listserv.

Multimedia (Photos, Videos).

Newsletters.

Outreach (limited, would engage other organizations, not directly people on the ground).

Press releases.

Shared messaging.

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X).

Web content.

Webinars.

Which of these communications channels would be most useful?

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To recap...



We have our why!



We've listed out target and secondary audiences to reach.



We've brainstormed specific messages for each audience.



We've considered different communications channels to use in reaching out audiences.



We've put together a list of trusted sources.



Thanks—you've done my work for me!

What works well?

- Simple language.
- Visuals.
- Consider the values, benefits and barriers of your audience.
- Education-based campaigns do not typically change one's behavior.
- Consider communications elements that prompt action—prompts, nudges, commitments or pledges.
- Evaluate how effective your messages are.
- Involve your communications staff early and often.





Questions? And Thank
You!

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*All photos courtesy of the Chesapeake Bay Program,
except for this one, which was taken by Brooke Landry.*