

Writing to Be Read

Instructor: Eleanor Ely
Editor, *The Volunteer Monitor* newsletter

“Getting the word out” may be the single most important thing we can do to protect water quality. But in a society glutted with information and short on time, how do we successfully compete for people’s attention? How do we write about water issues in a way that informs readers, is enjoyable to read, and even has the power to persuade and inspire?

This workshop is a crash course in the techniques professional writers use to attract and hold readers’ interest. It will provide tools you can apply right away, whether you’re writing an article for your local newspaper or a technical report for resource managers. We will explore such topics as:

- Bureaucrats’ favorite words ... and how to pick better ones
- Telling a story—even if you’re writing a scientific paper
- “Keep it simple” does not mean “Dumb it down”
- How to hook readers (hint: “background information” is not a “lead”)
- Making writing concrete and specific
- Getting the most from quotes

The principles and techniques will be illustrated with numerous real-life examples (good and bad), all drawn from writing about environmental science and issues.

This workshop is based on the presenter’s 18 years’ experience as a science writer and editor, including 16 years as editor of *The Volunteer Monitor*, a national publication about volunteer water quality monitoring.

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