



68th Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference BE THE CHANGE • MANAGE LOCALLY CONSERVE GLOBALLY

Madison, Wisconsin
December 9-12 2007

Media

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Planning

Over the course of several Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference Steering Committee meetings, it was decided to focus our efforts on attracting media coverage by outdoor writers from Wisconsin, along with local television. Twenty-three journalists were invited (all save one from Wisconsin) to staff the conference with the 'lure' being a waiver of the registration fee.

Execution

A letter was sent to each targeted journalist (see attachment), along with a draft copy of the program-at-a-glance a month prior to the conference. Five persons contacted me by the first of December indicating they planned on attending and requested media credentials (these were later provided upon checking in with the conference registration desk).

I then attempted to contact the remaining media on Dec. 3, especially local television, to remind them about the conference, highlight some agenda items and our theme BE THE CHANGE – manage locally conserve globally.

Results

Media members who staffed the conference were: Tim Eisele, Madison, *Madison Capital Times* and *Wisconsin Outdoor News*; Pat Durkin, Iola, syndicated columnist; Gary Engberg, Mazomanie, syndicated columnist and outdoor television show producer; and Dan Thomas, Elmhurst, IL, *Great Lakes Basin Publications* senior editor. A fifth writer, syndicated columnist Kevin Naze, Green Bay, was unable to attend due to inclement weather and road conditions.

Musings

Based on this endeavor and my work on a similar program – the national Wildlife Society conference – I’ve learned that it’s very difficult to attract outdoor (hook n’ bullet) and mainstream media to biology/science based conferences. However, while five positive responses out of 23 solicited is not a good batting average in any league, the coverage generated by the four writers could be termed successful when measured by the potential large numbers of articles and columns that a wide-ranging conference such as the Midwest can produce over succeeding months.

Recommendations

Don’t set aside a room for the media. Cell phones and laptops negate the need for it. Our media room was never used.

Dan Thomas, *Great Lakes Basin Publications* senior editor will probably attend the conference if invited. His focus is on Great Lakes’ fisheries.

Appendix 9. Example letter to media contacts.

**68th Midwest
Fish and Wildlife Conference**

c/o American Fisheries Society
Wisconsin Chapter
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Dear Scott::

The 68th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference is set for Madison Dec. 9-12 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center. As a working journalist, you are eligible for complementary registration. All you need do is reply to me via letter, phone call or email and I will make arrangements for your registration.

Once the conference begins, your press badge and conference program will be available to pick-up at the conference registration desk.

I am enclosing the conference's draft Program-At-A-Glance to get a head start on scheduling which sessions you plan on attending.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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