

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNICATION: INITIAL ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND MAINTENANCE OF HOPE

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Initial engagement of environmental issues along with maintenance of hope and resilience are important factors in creating a society focused on sustainability. Science communication can often seem distant, unrelatable, and lacking in emotion. The purpose of this study is to research how environmental organizations communicate their findings to engage the public in an effective manner as well as to research how the practitioners themselves stay resilient in the field. Through a human-subjects based experiment, answers were obtained from environmental organizations' interviewees about their approaches to audience engagement. The interviewees came from a set of very diverse environmental organizations – some including the Washington Department of Ecology and Oregon State University's Marine Studies Initiative. This study hopes to synthesize relevant information regarding how to best communicate environmental media and how to engage people in a way that will sustain a love for the environment throughout their lives. I conducted this study by working with my site supervisor from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the West Coast Region (comprising Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California), by creating a comprehensive set of questions to ask my interviewees. I asked them what their organizations do to engage people, how they personally became involved in the environment, and why they are still in the field today. Effective communication through personal connections, storytelling, emotions, hope communication, and creativity are of utmost importance in making people aware of environmental issues. These tactics allow people to maintain their initial love for the environment.