



# Water Words That Work

## Workshop Evaluation:

### Data and Summary Statements

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***Water Words that Work: messages and communication to engage citizens in your Area of Concern***

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

This report summarizes evaluation data and statements of a one-day workshop for citizen advisory committee (CAC) members and Wisconsin Areas of Concern staff. The workshop goal was to improve their communication and outreach abilities with [Water Words that Work](#) author Eric Eckl. Eckl's workshop provides practical strategies for identifying your audience and how to best convey your message to engage citizens in Areas of Concern.

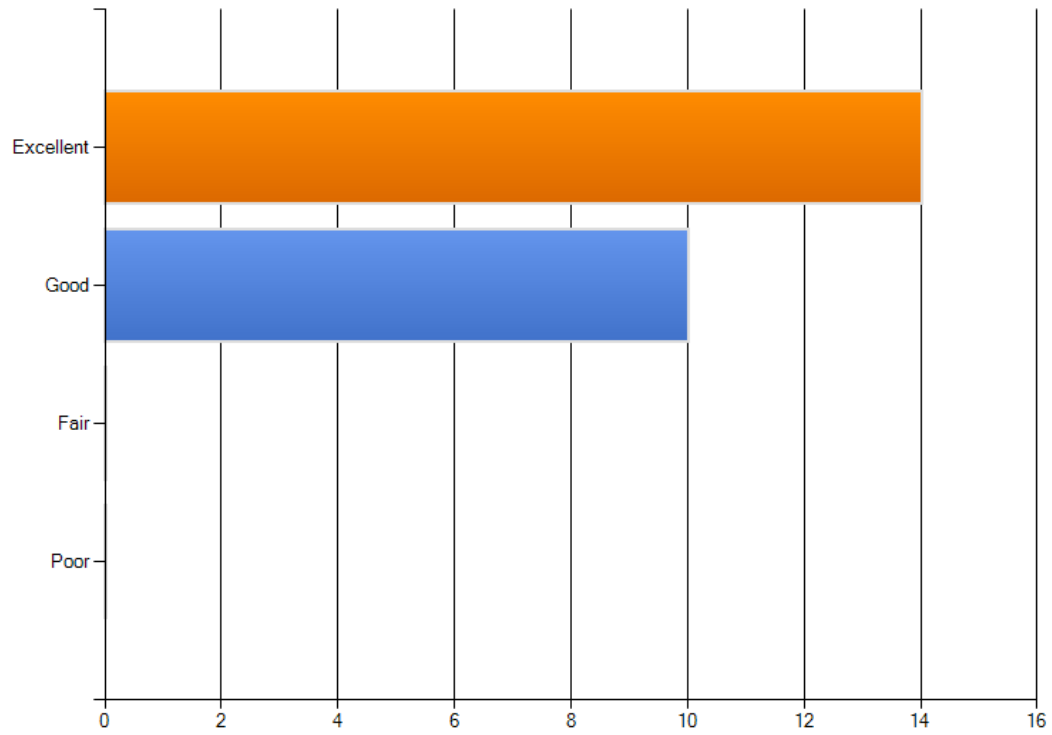
A critical component to the delisting process is support and approval by the local CAC and the broader community. In addition, the CAC is the conduit of key messages to the greater community. Enhanced understanding of the issues involved in removing beneficial use impairments is critical and therefore the "messages" must translate scientific studies, government reports, raw data, and other professional materials into communications that are meaningful and compelling for everyday citizens. Research shows that many communications efforts from nature protection and pollution control experts not only fail to connect with and motivate audience — they backfire. This workshop addressed the methods and concepts in developing the key messages that align with the perspective that everyday citizens have on nature protection and pollution control, and fosters community motivation to take action.<sup>1</sup>

A web-based survey was conducted of the 45 attendees of the June 14, 2012 workshop held at the Zoofari Center in Wauwatosa Wisconsin. 24 people responded. While the survey was open, two emails were sent as a reminder to those who had not yet completed the survey.

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<sup>1</sup> *Water Words that Work*, <http://waterwordsthatwork.com/environmental-message-method/>

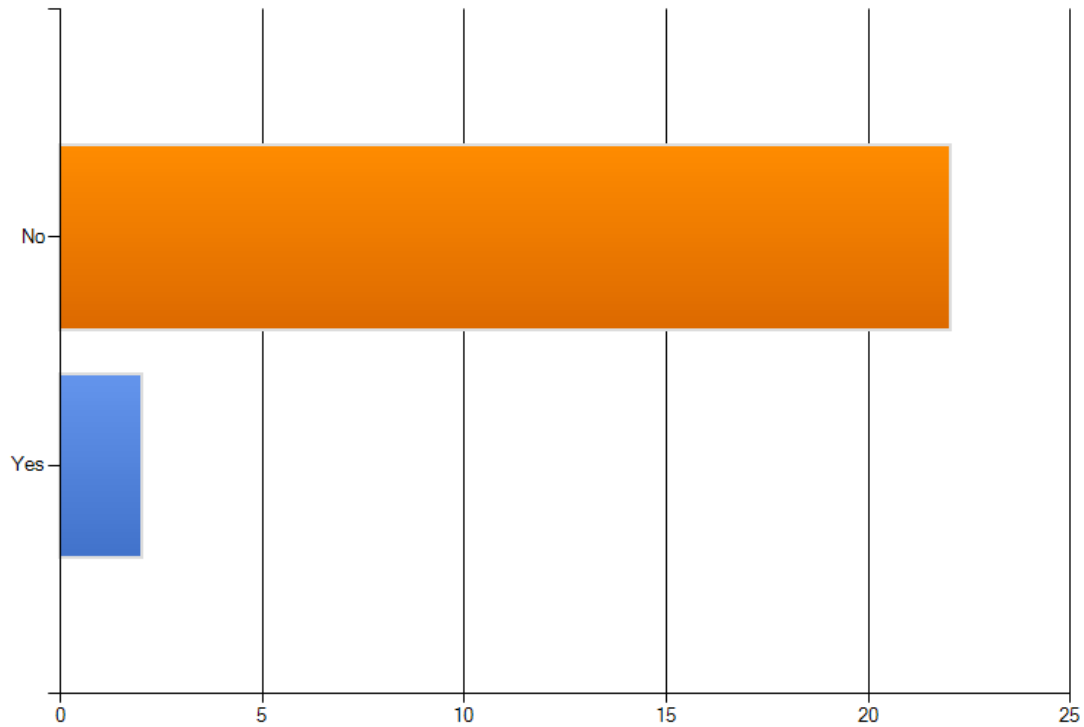
**1. Overall how would you rate your experience at the workshop?**



**Comments:**

- The content was excellent, the facility and food left a little to be desired, but it was ok.

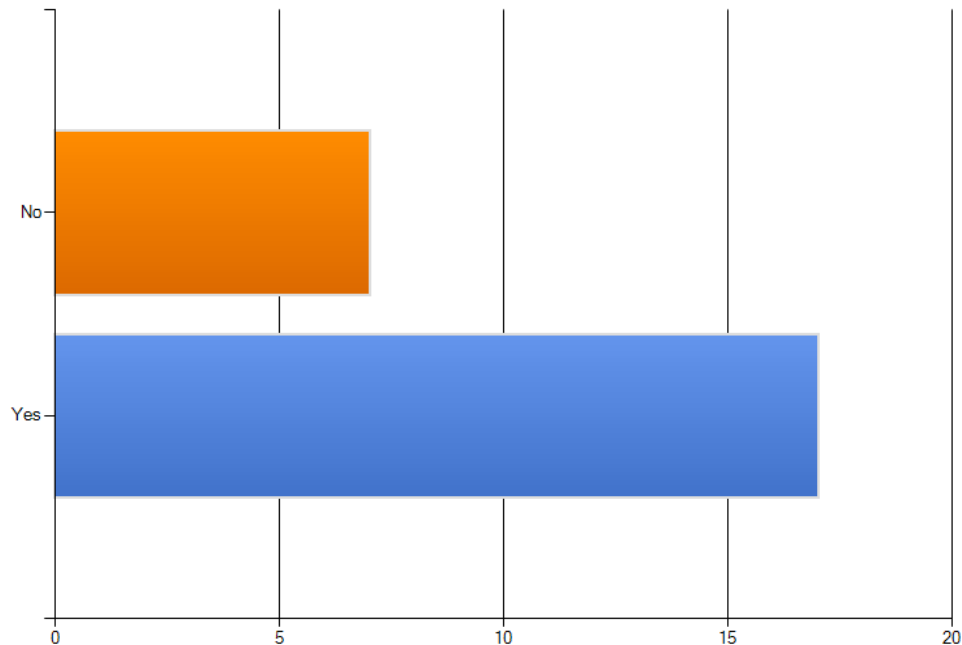
**2. Did you experience any difficulties or problems that negatively affected your workshop participation?**



**Comments:**

- The only thing that was hard for me was the lunch change. We went from 1 hour to 30 minutes. I am a nursing mother, and had to make a choice between pumping and eating lunch so I was a bit frustrated with that. It was nice that a snack was provided during the break though
- zoofari conference room is dark and dreary

### 3. Was there any one part of the workshop that now stands out as being particularly memorable?

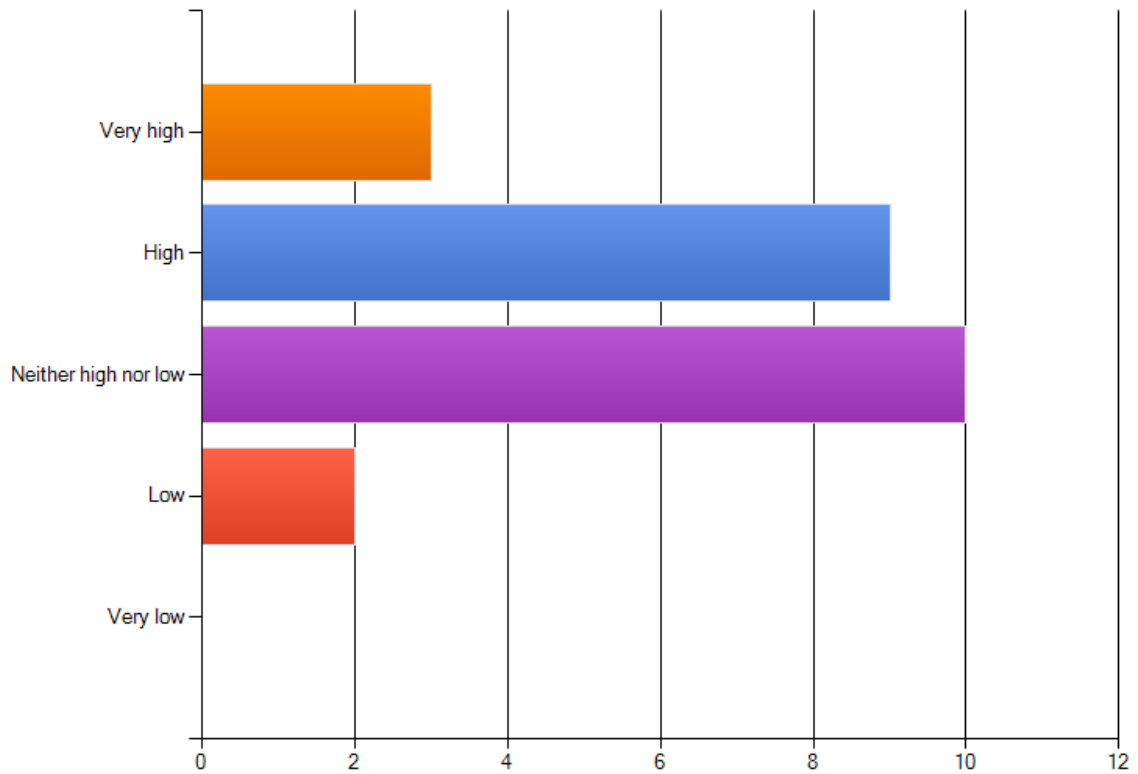


If yes, please identify which part and explain why it was memorable

- All of it!
- The sample websites were a great example of how hard it can be for someone to learn about an organization. They were hard for many of the science professionals to get through, so for an ordinary person they would lose interest in the first sentence.
- The content was very applicable and useful.
- The presenter was magnificent. Very focused.
- Photos
- When Eric mentioned that just promoting awareness won't lead to actions in the community...it made a lot of sense when he said to just tell people what you want them to do first, then explain why
- The powerpoint was very effective
- Liked the small group work.
- Start your communication with the Action - don't need to give the background.
- I thought Eric had a great demeanor and didn't speak down to people. Was willing to take questions and keep the conversations going.
- The interviews, the statistics - important for me justifying photos over words!
- photo selection section
- Rethinking message to building confidence to take a SPECIFIC action
- Begin with behavior, and the audience doesn't need to know why.
- reminder to use the readability index in MS Word
- I would have never thought confidence would be an indicator.

- The realization that a majority of the public probably does not understand a lot of the information we present in handouts, brochures, and promotional items.

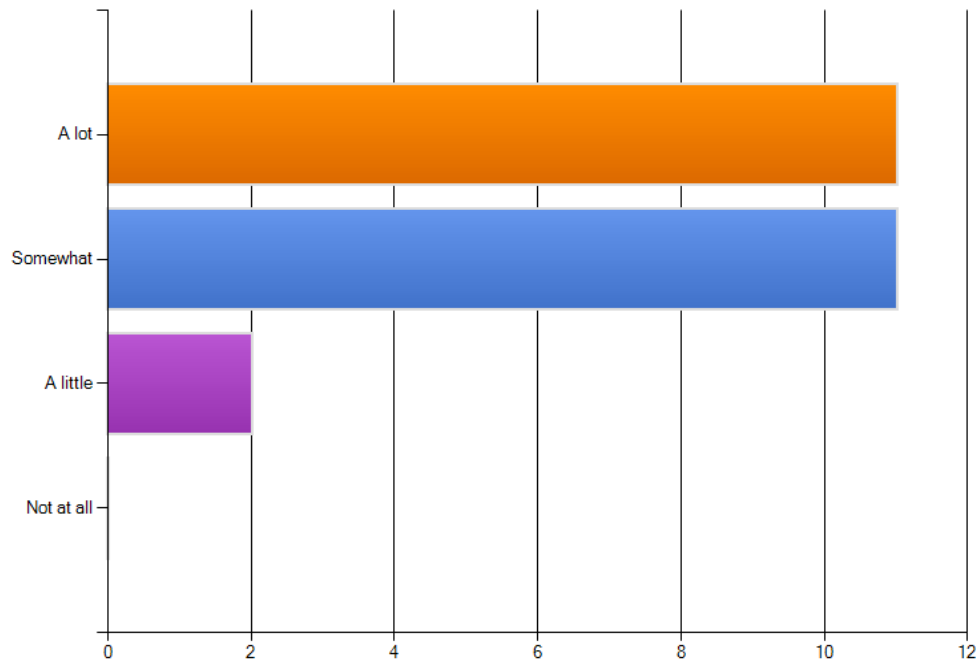
**4. Before the workshop, how would you describe your level of knowledge about messaging and communications about water?**



**Comments:**

- I have not been involved in communication research projects directly other than basic audience surveys and focus groups.

**5. As a result of attending the workshop, how much would you say your knowledge of messaging and communication about water increased?**



**Comments:**

- Excellent
- Although my knowledge did not increase significantly, the messages delivered were nice reminders
- Not sure if the techniques will work in all cases, but certainly some good information about how to win people over.

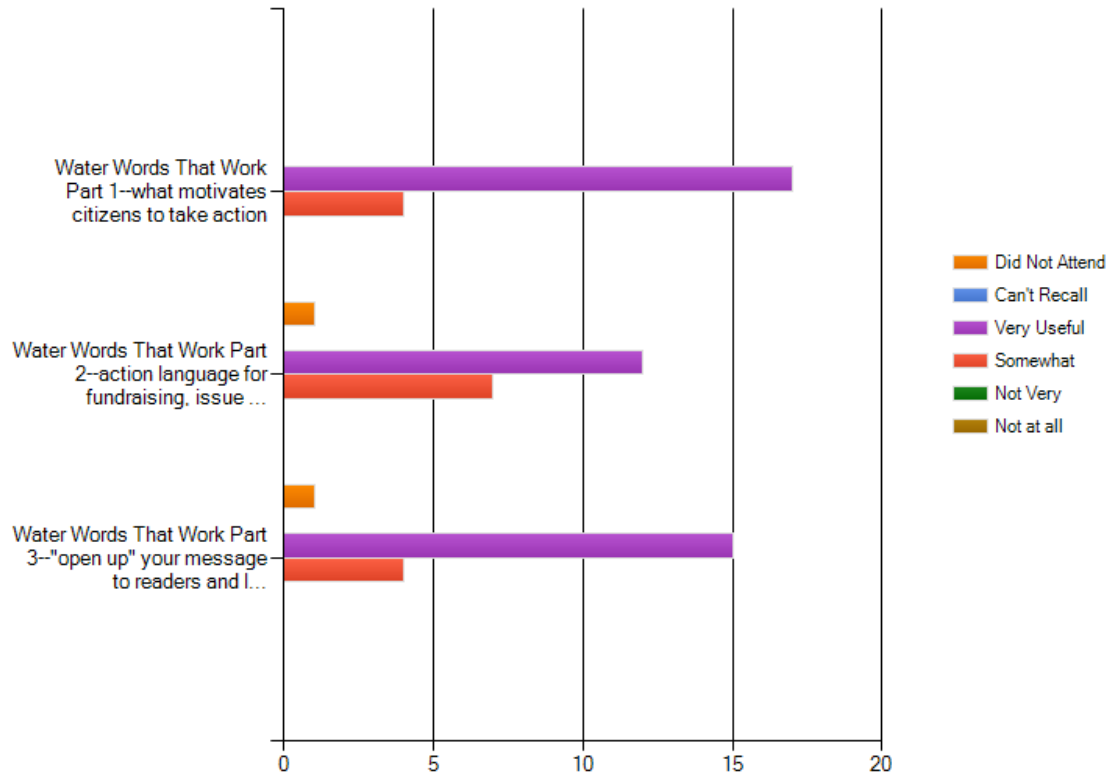
**6. Please list one or two ways you are likely to use workshop information in your work with Areas of Concern (AOCs).**

- Writing and designing publications, but also in verbal communication with lay persons.
- Probably in helping me with creative text writing
- In all of the publications we do.
- I am using it daily in the materials I am developing.
- better written brochures and finding terms that we all understand
- will take more care to use water words in crafting public information and announcements
- My students at Pulaski High School were asked to make educational videos about the Green Bay Area of Concern. Initially we thought we would just make thirteen videos to educate people/promote awareness on the 13 BUI's. Now we know that we will need to approach the videos by starting with actions people can take. I think the list of terms to use will help as well when we write script.
- In brochures and newsletters.
- Will be more aware of Passive vs Active copy and starting with behavioral opportunities for our audience before lecturing!
- Improving messages on fact sheets, permanent and temporary signs, display materials, how I will engage my Citizen Advisory Committee.
- We'll rethink the way we develop newsletters, brochures, signage etc



## 7. To what extent did the 3 sessions provide useful information related to your work with AOCs?

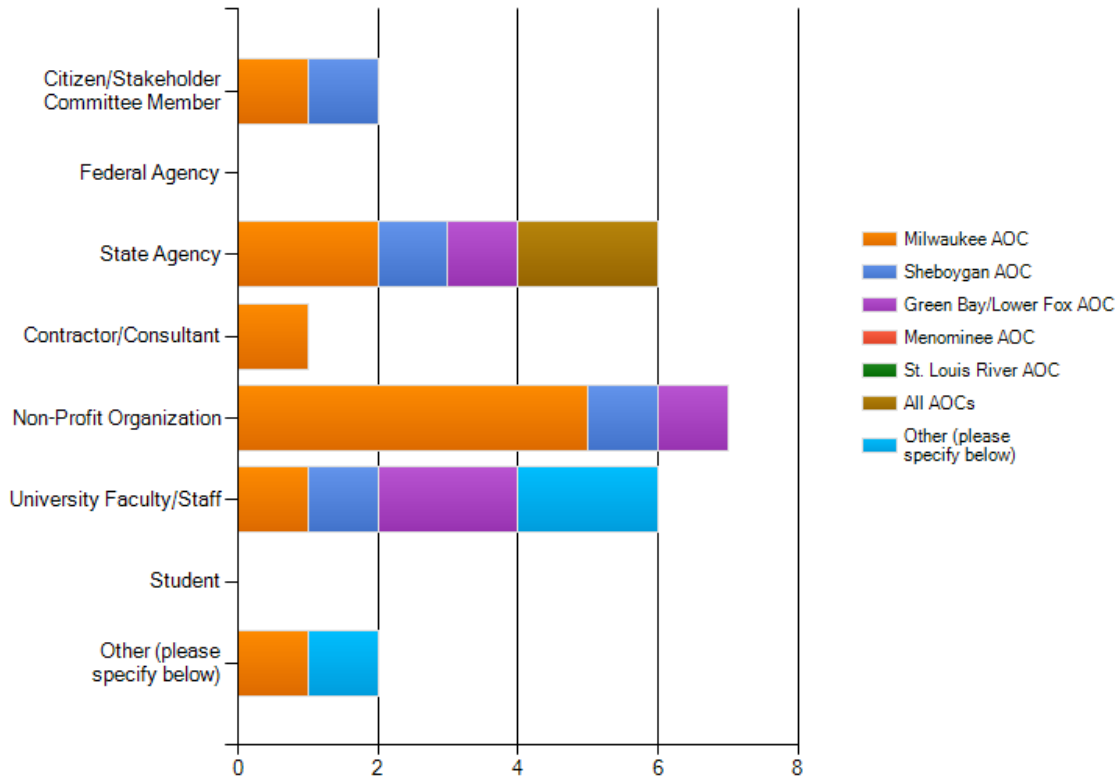
Comments:



Comments:

- By the time part three came around, our entire group was getting tired and worried about getting stuck in traffic.
- The topics answered some of the questions I've had for a long time about reaching audiences, and also got me to think about some things that I had not thought of before.

**8. Which one of the following best describes you as a meeting participant?**



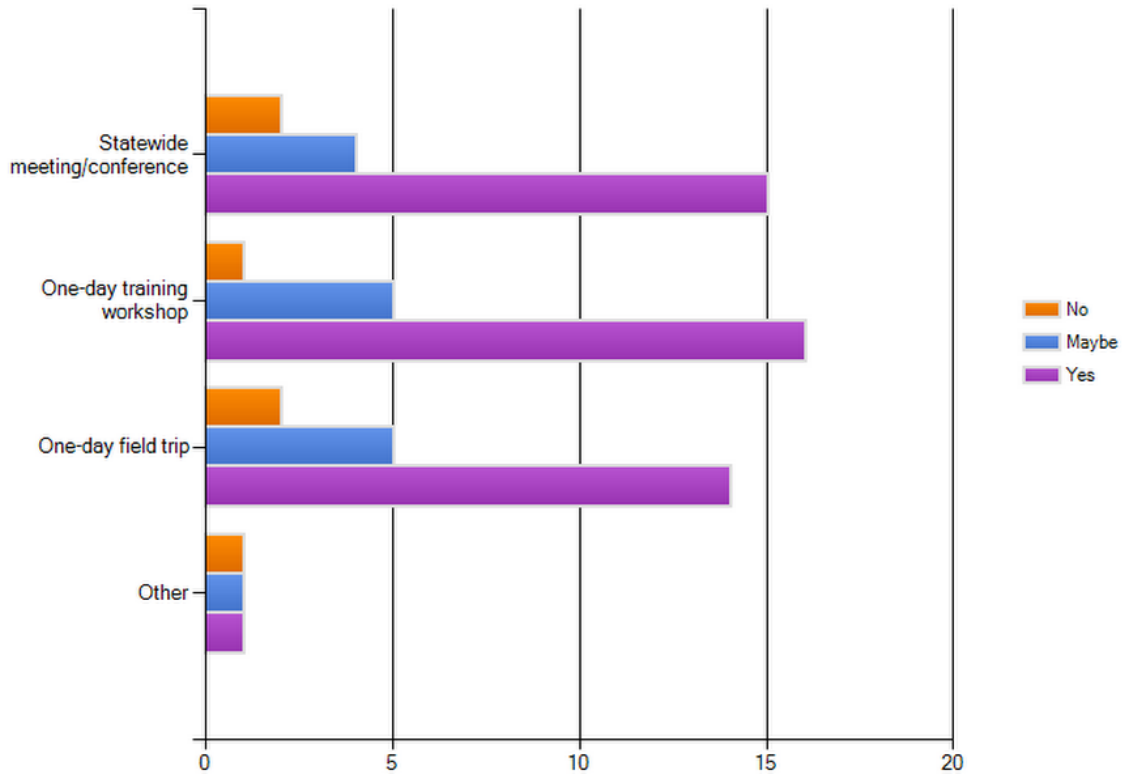
Other:

- Natural Resources Educator UWEX
- interpretive graphics for the zoo
- County Government
- high school teacher working on education/outreach with Green Bay AOC
- Milwaukee County Zoo
- UW-Extension

**9. Do you have any suggestions for improving future Wisconsin's Great Lakes Areas of Concern training events? If yes, please list below.**

- same type of workshops because we have sufficient information from the myriad studies but we need better work spreading that information to the citizens
- Field trips to showcase ongoing or completed remediation; Hold AOC training at State of Lake (LaMP) Conferences (e.g. State of Lake Michigan Conference in Sheboygan, Oct. 16-17, 2013)
- Use example documents that come from the participants/organizers for the breakout exercises.
- This was a very "actionable" training, providing technical knowledge we can easily implement --- that's the best approach
- No.

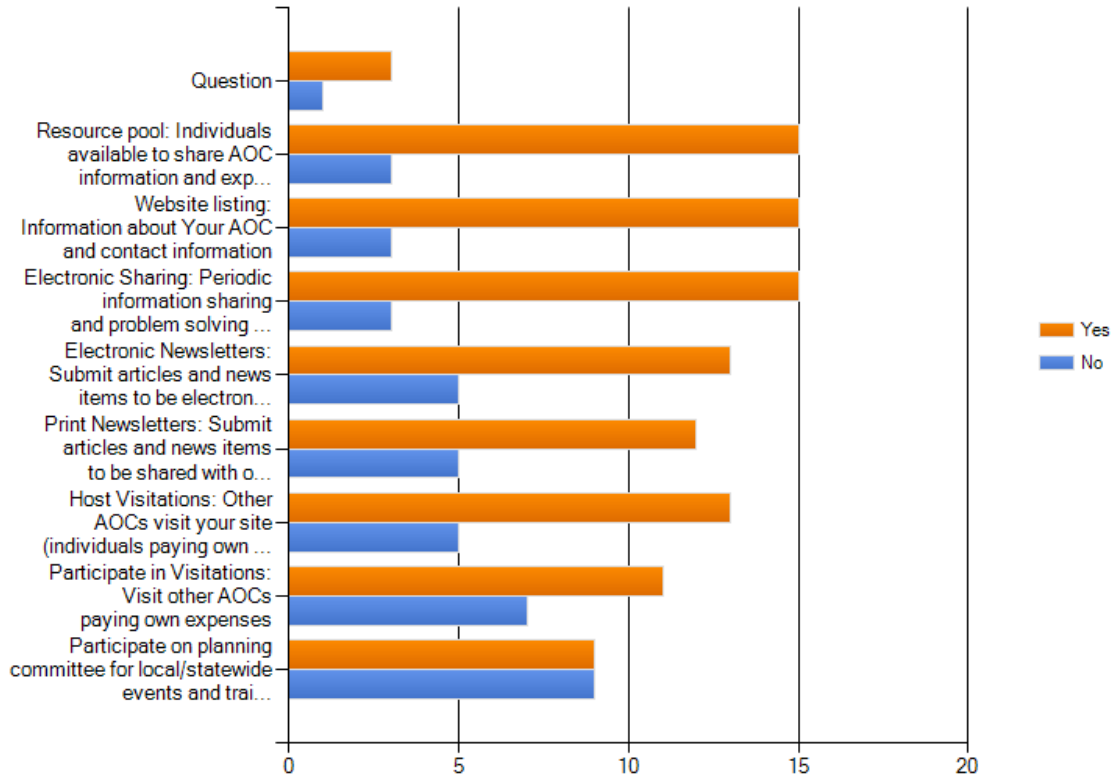
**10. Do you have recommendations about topics for any future trainings? If yes, please list below.**



**Comments:**

- if it were in Milwaukee
- Multiday trainings & field experiences.

**12. Would you be likely to use or participate in any of the following potential services or activities? Check "Yes" or "No."  
(6 skipped question)**



**13. Is there anything else you want to tell us about the workshop and its usefulness to you? If yes, please do so below.**

- Thanks for a fun day. It was worth my time.
- In a few instances, the presenter could have been a little bit more sensitive about the language he used. For example, at one point he talked about a "cripple," which I found to be a bit surprising (and offensive).
- Very useful and applicable to our work. I expect to use the information learned weekly, if not more!
- This was the most useful workshop I've ever attended. My whole perception of outreach has changed regarding audience, they don't need facts, they just need to know what to do. The public will generally trust scientists with the facts and most will try to do the right thing.
- No.