

# Making the Most of the Media

## *In-Class Exercises*

### Part 1: The Big Picture

#### Warm-Up Exercise: The Discipline of the Disabled Dog

1. What is your name?
2. How did you get here today?
3. What is the recipe for making a soft-boiled egg?
4. If you wanted to win a lot of money on a game show, which one would you try out for?
5. What is your favorite song?
6. What is the tallest building you have ever visited?
7. What would the best possible present for your next birthday?
8. What's the first secret you ever told when you weren't supposed to?
9. What is the messiest room in your home?
10. Where do you want to go on your next vacation?

#### Exercise #2: Begin With Behavior

<b>Behavior</b>	<b>% of Americans Who Report Doing This On Any Issue</b>
Attended an organized protest	32%
Attended a town hall or hearing	4%
Contacted the government about an issue	30%
Signed a petition	24%
Volunteered for a campaign or cause	8%

## Exercise #3: Foolproof Photos

Photo Provided Directly to Journalists:

### Land Trust receives state grant to complete 200-acre wetlands property purchase

ELIZABETH LARSON POSTED ON SUNDAY, 12 JANUARY 2020 03:30  
12 JANUARY 2020



The shoreline of the 200-acre Wright property near Lakeport, California, which the Lake County Land Trust is purchasing with a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Photo courtesy of the Lake County Land Trust.

Sketch a Better Version:

Photo Op Staged by Environmental Organization:

### Protesters of Mountain Valley Pipeline Chain Themselves to Equipment at Construction Sites

By BRITTANY PATTERSON • JUN 28, 2019



A Mountain Valley Pipeline protestor on an excavator in Summers County, West Virginia on Wednesday, June 26, 2019.

APPROACHING AGAINST PIPELINES

Sketch a Better Version:

Story w/o Photo:

## Effort to Remove Dam, Restore Herring and Salmon in Maine

A Maine conservationist group is removing what's left of an unused hydroelectric station that impedes the migration of fish in the Dennys River.

By **Associated Press**, Wire Service Content Jan. 11, 2020

**MEDDYBEMPS, MAINE (AP)** — A [Maine](#) conservationist group is removing what's left of an unused hydroelectric station that impedes the migration of fish in the Dennys River.

The station dates to the 1940s and stops alewives and salmon from getting upstream, the Downeast Salmon Federation said. The group characterized the station, located near Meddybemps Lake in rural Washington County, as abandoned for several decades and no longer available for use.

Sketch a Photo to Illustrate the Story:

## Exercise #4: Swap the Shoptalk

Rewrite this soundbite from a press release:

“Our data suggests that the spread of **impervious surface** is leading to an increase in **nonpoint source pollution**,” said Jane Doe, executive director of the Clean Water Alliance. “That’s not just a problem for **biodiversity**, we’re also losing our **ecosystem services**.”

## Exercise #5: The “Words That Work”

### When explaining an environmental issue...

- Protect nature
- Control pollution
- Enough clean water
- Wildlife conservation

### When addressing the “so what” question...

- Future Generations
- Healthy
- Family & Children
- Safe
- Trends

### When encouraging somebody to do something...

- Make a Difference
- Doing my/your/their part
- It affects you
- What you can do
- Working together
- Save Money

### When asking somebody to take your side...

- Accountability
- Corporations (evokes negative feelings)/Businesses (evokes positive feelings)
- Choice
- Fair
- Balance
- Planning Ahead
- Responsible
- Freedom
- Investment
- Law

## Part 2: Understanding the News Business

### Exercise #6: Targeting Audiences Through the Media

Imagine you can commit 5 hours reaching out to these outlets to cover your environmental education program. Based on this information in their rate cards, how would you allocate your time?

Audience Criteria	Fiction County Tattler	Metro Parenting Magazine	Metro Popular Morning Radio Show
Description:	Weekly Suburban Newspaper	Monthly magazine aimed at parents	Morning "Shock Jock" DJ
Circulation Area:	Fiction County Only	Fiction County + 4 other counties in the metro region	Fiction County + 7 other counties in the metro region
Circulation #:	35,000	25,000	150,000
Audience Gender:	55% M 45% F	35% M 65% F	61% M 39% F
Audience Education:	B.A. or Higher 60%	B.A. or Higher 45%	B.A. or Higher 15%
Audience Parental Status:	Kids at home 44%	Kids at home 90%	Unknown
Hours of Effort:	?	?	?

## Exercise #7: Who's Who in the Newsroom

<b>Title</b>	<b>Role</b>
Beat Reporter	An experienced reporter who covers one or more topics consistently
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	Bosses and managers
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	Dole assignments to reporters
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	Entry level reporters who cover the news of the day
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	Oversee opinion pieces from the outlet and guest voices
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	Polish reporters' work
News or Assignment Editor	Reporters who dig deep into somebody's dirty laundry

## Exercise #7: Types of “News”

Los Angeles Times

# Editorial: Trump’s proposed new environmental reviews rules are as bad as you’d expect



The Trump administration’s proposed new environmental regulations would largely ignore the impact of climate change in considering many new projects, including private pipelines. (Los Angeles Times)

By THE TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD JAN. 10, 2020 | 3 AM

In what could be the administration’s broadest attack yet on federal environmental regulations, the [Trump administration](#) on Thursday [proposed](#) making it easier to approve major energy and infrastructure projects, including new highways and pipelines, without full consideration of their environmental impact or their effects on climate change. Billed as an effort to make the 1970 [National Environmental Policy Act](#) more efficient, the new rules would make it easier for many projects with significant detrimental environmental impacts to proceed without crucial reviews.



LATEST OPINION >

OPINION

Letters to the Editor: The Harvey Weinstein trial is Exhibit A for why women don’t come forward

1 hour ago

OPINION

Op-Ed: Evangelicals have a role in political life. It isn’t fawning over Trump

1 hour ago

OPINION

Editorial: The Supreme Court may poke another hole in the ‘wall of separation’ between church and state

1 hour ago

OPINION

Editorial: Even under impeachment, Trump is still corruptly steering business to his properties

1 hour ago



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

# DAILY NEWS

Since 1854 — News from Montcalm County and Ionia County, Michigan



ENTER TO WIN TICKETS!  
READ THE DAILY NEWS CLASSIFIEDS  
FOR TODAY'S CODE WORD

THE ORIGINAL  
\* HARLEM \*  
GLOBETROTTERS

CLICK HERE TO ENTER  
TODAY'S CODE WORD  
DAILY NEWS

[OBITUARIES](#) [HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [FEATURES](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [E-EDITION](#) [READERS CHOICE AWARDS](#) [f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [i](#)

## JUST IN: Sanitary sewer overflow in Lake Odessa

*By The Daily News Staff | on January 12, 2020*

LAKE ODESSA — The Lakewood Wastewater Authority had a sanitary sewer overflow in Ionia County on Saturday at 1619 Jordan Lake St. in Lake Odessa.

The overflow began at 9:27 a.m. and ended at 12:15 p.m., according to Doug Suntken, superintendent of the Lakewood Wastewater Authority.

The Ionia County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE) were both notified, according to Suntken.

### Get Local Sports Headlines Daily

Email Required



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

# Keystone oil spill casts doubt on the safety of proposed Keystone XL pipeline

Living on Earth

November 28, 2019 · 11:45 AM EST

Writer **Adam Wernick**



 Listen to the story.   



Microsoft  
Get the latest version of Excel with Office 365.  
Now only **\$10.00** per user/mo.  
   
[CLICK HERE](#) →

The Keystone pipeline spilled nearly 400,000 gallons of tar sands oil into a wetland in Walsh County, North Dakota.

Credit: Taylor DeVries, North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality

On Oct. 29, 2019, a nearly 400,000-gallon oil spill was discovered in the Keystone pipeline system in North Dakota. The spill inundated a wetland with heavy crude oil mined from the Alberta tar sands.

[Report of the spill](#) came on the same day Keystone operator, TC Energy, was assuring regulators at a hearing that it has properly considered the environmental and safety impacts of its controversial proposed pipeline extension, known as Keystone XL.

Latest Content



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

# WHNT News 19 investigation: A busy year tracking 3M's environmental impact in North Alabama

POSTED 7:17 PM, JANUARY 1, 2020. BY [CHELSEA BRENTZEL](#). UPDATED AT 07:19PM, JANUARY 1, 2020

[FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [REDDIT](#) | [PINTEREST](#) | [LINKEDIN](#) | [EMAIL](#)



DECATUR, Ala. -- Illegal chemical releases, a multi-million dollar settlement, and a federal investigation. Those are just some of the headlines of the year for 3M's Decatur plant.

At the start of 2019, [WHNT News 19's investigative team traveled to Minnesota](#), the birthplace of 3M. We wanted to understand how and why Minnesota took a different approach from the state of Alabama when dealing with contamination tied to 3M's PFAS chemicals. The chemicals were found at unhealthy levels in the drinking water in Lawrence County in 2016, but the state didn't step in. After those same chemicals were found in Minnesota's drinking water -- the attorney general sued 3M -- and got an \$850 million settlement for cleanup.



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	



Bucks County high school sports schedule

DART West route through Chalfont, New Britain in service



Queen Me...



THE PROFESSIONALS FOR ALL YOUR PLUMBING, HEATING, AIR CONDITIONING AND UTILITY NEEDS!

215.752.9  
155 N Green St, La

LEARN M

Opinion

## Guest Opinion: Congress should fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund

By Thomas Gery

Posted at 5:10 AM



I have spent countless days with my children on public lands enjoying Southeastern Pennsylvania's great outdoors creating lifelong memories. I'm proud to pass on my love of this nation's land to them and am equally rewarded to see that love passed on from my children to theirs.

But I am fully aware that protection of these wondrous spaces is continually challenged, and without proper vigilance, these spaces may not be around for my great-grandchildren.

Since 1964 the chief protector of our nation's public lands and waterways has been the Land and Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF, a bipartisan program designed to safeguard our nation's most precious natural resources, ensuring that every American has access to our nation's historic battlefields, local ballfields and everything in between at no cost to the taxpayer.

**MASTROIENI FURNITURE**

72" Sofa starting at \$899

**SMALL FURNITURE FOR SMALL SPACES**

Mon-Wed-Fri 10 to 8  
Tues-Thurs- Sat 10 to 6  
Sunday 12 to 5

**SHOP NOW**



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

## Exercise #9: Getting Reporters' Attention

	Pitch	Media Advisory	Press Release
What is it?	A story proposal to an individual journalist by name	An invitation to journalists to participate in an event that you organize — and prepare a story based on what happens there.	A pre-packaged story that you offer to media outlets to either run verbatim or edit as they see fit — <i>without</i> crediting you as the source.
What's Hard	You must find the right reporter and their email address/phone number/twitter handle	You must organize an event!  You have to coordinate with participants to meet journalists' needs for background information, interviews, and photos.	You have to write a story and find photos that meet journalistic standards.  You may need to ghostwrite quotes for individuals and secure their approval to use them.
What's Easy	Short!  The pitch is private — you don't have to format it for public consumption or posting on the web	You don't have to write much.	You don't have to organize an event.
Your Competition	Countless other pitches the journalist gets	Breaking news that is higher priority than your story.	Media outlets often have their pick of press releases to choose from.
You Do Control	Which journalists receive your pitch	The date, time, and location of the event, as well as who is there for the journalists to talk to.	The story and photos you offer to the media outlet.
You Don't Control	How they receive your pitch — and how well their editors receive the pitch	The weather.  What participants tell the journalist.	How the media outlet edits your press release, and what additional sources they interview.
Journalists Wonder	Is this pitch <b>exclusive</b> ?  Will my editor approve me working on this story?  Who else can I get a soundbite from?	Will the event be worth the time commitment?  What other journalists will be there?	How many other journalists are going to do this story?  Is this a credible source?

## Sample Media Pitch (Feel Good)

Hi Reporter Name,

I'll get straight to the point. <Brief summary of why you think this journalist's past work suggests this might fit for them> I follow your coverage of the zoning controversy in our town, and I have a related story that might be of interest to you.

<Brief summary of story, minus any particular details> My organization has recently concluded negotiations with a large corporation in this area to begin a major stream restoration project on a waterway flowing through their facility. We anticipate breaking ground on the project in the near future. The company will contribute \$400,000 to the project, and dozens of staff will help with the tree planting at the end of the project.

<Terms of the offer> I'd like to offer you advance, exclusive access to this story before the public announcement. If you and editors agree to this offer, we'll provide you with background materials, interviews with key players, and access to the site to take photos.

I'll touch base tomorrow to see if you are interested. If you decline or I don't hear from you, I'll offer the story to another journalist.

Thanks for your consideration.

Your Name  
Contact Info

## Sample Media Pitch (Hit Hard)

Hi Reporter Name,

I'll get straight to the point. <Brief summary of why you think this journalist's past work suggests this might fit for them> I follow your coverage of the zoning controversy in our town, and I have a related story that might be of interest to you.

<Brief summary of story, minus any particular details> As you know, Polluto-Corp is proposing to locate a new facility in this area. My organization is opposed to this on the grounds that it will cause a lot of environmental damage and create only a handful of jobs.

<Terms of the offer> If you want to look into this story, we are standing by to help you. We have documents that demonstrate that Polluto-Corp has a long history of toxic waste leaks at other sites, and we have spokespeople from those communities who are ready to tell their story. We want to provide these materials to a journalist who will dig deep to get to the truth.

I'll touch base tomorrow to see if you are interested. If you decline or I don't hear from you, I'll offer the story to another journalist.

Thanks for your consideration.

Your Name  
Contact Info

## Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: (insert date)

Contact: Carla Conservationist, (987) 654-3210, [carla.conservationist@localcd.org](mailto:carla.conservationist@localcd.org)

### NEWS: Piney Run Restoration Benefits Local Farm, Downstream Neighbors

*Successful project reduces erosion, flooding, and water pollution*

(Local County, Pennsylvania) The Local Conservation District and Fearless Farms finished restoring 300 yards of stream along Piney Creek this week. The project solves erosion headaches for the landowner while reducing flood and water pollution problems for downstream neighbors. The partners stabilized the streambank using natural methods and planted hundreds of trees. They also installed 300 yards of fencing to protect the area from livestock.

"I've been watching my pasture slide into the stream for years, but I never knew what to do about it," said Fred Farmer, owner of Fearless Farms. "I feel great knowing that my soil will stay put and my kids won't have to deal with this when they take over the farm."

Degraded waterways, like Piney Creek, cause erosion problems for landowners. They also cause floods and pollution downstream. Repairs take expertise, teamwork, and money. For this project, the Local Conservation District secured an agreement from Fearless Farms to restore the site. Then the District prepared studies, engineering plans, and funding.

"We can already measure how the water downstream of the site is cleaner than water upstream," said Carla Conservationist with the Local Conservation District. "As the trees mature, the stream will improve even more."

To complete this project, the partners had to overcome several challenges. Fearless Farms is a working farm. The partners had to work around planting, harvesting, and weather.

"We cherish our rural lifestyle here in Local County," said Councilman Steve Slicktalker. "This project shows how farmers and our conservation community can work together to make a difference for everyone."

Teamwork was a big part of the project. Fearless Farms approved the project and provided matching funds. The District provided cost-share and technical assistance. Jones Construction stabilized the stream bank. Volunteers planted the trees.

The Local Conservation District's mission is to protect and improve waterways throughout Local County. The District provides land conservation, stormwater management, and technical support. Local Conservation District has a staff of three and is overseen by a board of five citizens who are elected to 4-year terms by county voters.

###

Before-During-After Photos Available Upon Request.

Contact Carla Conservationist at (987) 654-3210 or [carla.conservationist@localcd.org](mailto:carla.conservationist@localcd.org)

**waterwordsthatwork.com**

*Make a Splash With Your Communications!*

## Sample Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: (insert date)

Contact: Carla Conservationist

Telephone: (987) 654-3210

E-mail: [carla.conservationist@localcd.org](mailto:carla.conservationist@localcd.org)

Website: [www.localcd.org](http://www.localcd.org)

# Media Advisory: Stream Restoration Ribbon Cutting

- Who: Fred Farmer, Fearless Farms  
Carla Conservationist, Local Conservation District  
Steve Slicktalker, County Councilman
- What: Showcasing a Stream Restoration Project
- Where: Fearless Farms, 123 County Road, Small Town, Pennsylvania 98765
- When: Tuesday, October 5th, 2018, 9:00 a.m.
- Why: Commemorating the completion of a restoration project along Piney Run
- Photos: Media can take photos of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the Piney Run streamsite, and any wildlife that happen to be in the area. Event organizers will provide "before" pictures of the site prior to the restoration project. The Conservation District will stage scientific water sampling in Piney Run to illustrate the downstream benefits of this project.

The Local Conservation District will commemorate the completion of a restoration project along 300 yards of streambank along Piney Run, which runs through Fearless Farms. Two years in the making, the project is a win-win for Fearless Farms and downstream communities. Fearless Farms will benefit from reduced streambank erosion that was slowly eating away valuable pasture. Downstream neighbors will enjoy cleaner water and reduced flooding downstream of the restoration site.

###

**Exercise #10: Tempting Testimonials (Who Americans’ Trust)**

Alphabetical Order	Most Trusted (On Top) to Least (On Bottom)
Business Leaders	
Elected Officials	
K-12 Principals and Superintendents	
Medical Scientists	
Military	
News Media	
Religious Leaders	
Scientists	

## Part 3: Working With Journalists

### Exercise #11: Review Readability

Rewrite these paragraphs. Aim for a Readability Score of 45 to 55. Change the meaning as little as possible:

**May 11, 2018** - On October 19, 2017, the International Joint Commission (IJC) was asked by the Canadian and American governments to examine the various problems linked to nutrient loading in Lake Memphremagog and Missisquoi bay on Lake Champlain and to come up with recommendations on ways to increase our efforts to reduce the nutrient loading coming from the watersheds.

The IJC is looking to Memphremagog Conservation Inc (MCI) and the Memphremagog Watershed Association (MWA) to undertake this study. MCI, based out of Magog, Quebec, has worked for more than 50 years to improve Lake Memphremagog's water quality. MWA in Vermont was created in 2007 and has a mission to protect and improve the waters of the Memphremagog Watershed.

## Exercise #12: Finding Journalists on Social Media

1. Search on news.google.com for a story about your organization or an issue that you are working on
2. Look for the byline for the reporter that prepared the story
3. Look for a bio for that reporter and see if there is social media contact information for him or her
4. If not, search Twitter or Facebook for that journalist by name

**What did you find?**



## Exercise #12: Observing Others' Use of Tags, Sharing, etc.

Organization	#Hashtags Used	Other Users Tagged	Shared/Retweeted From
<a href="#">New York City Water</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/NYCWater">https://twitter.com/NYCWater</a>	#NYE2017, #Happy2017, #hermosaNYC, #Bronx	@TimesquareN YC @NYCParks @NYCSchools	Ciudad de Nueva York NYC DDC NYC IntIAffairs
<a href="#">Texas Living Waters</a> Facebook: <a href="http://bit.ly/wwtw-tlw">http://bit.ly/wwtw-tlw</a>			
<a href="#">Iowa Department of Natural Resources</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/iowadnr">https://twitter.com/iowadnr</a>			
<a href="#">San Francisco Baykeeper</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/sanfranciscobaykeeper/">https://www.facebook.com/sanfranciscobaykeeper/</a>			

## Exercise #13: Putting it All Together

# Gutting the National Environmental Policy Act is out of step with reality

Jan. 22, 2020 at 3:21 pm

f e t



A section of the Dakota Access Pipeline under construction near the town of St. Anthony in Morton County, North Dakota, in 2016 (Tom Stromme / The Bismarck Tribune via AP, File)



By Craig Gannett and Peter Jackson

Special to *The Times*

During the recent blast of impeachment, Iran and war powers' recriminations, there was this: President Donald Trump marked the 50th anniversary of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) — arguably America's most important environmental statute — by attempting to gut it. Specifically, the president proposed changes to the NEPA process that would remove the requirement to consider “indirect,” “direct” and “cumulative” effects on the environment.

The primary goal of these changes is to insulate proposed infrastructure projects from the consideration of climate change. Under the new Trump rules, for example, rising sea levels would no longer be taken into account. Ironically, the U.S. Navy — which understands the science and magnitude of climate change — is already planning for sea-level rise with respect to its own infrastructure. By barring consideration of these undeniable effects, billions of taxpayer dollars could be wasted on ill-conceived infrastructure necessary to America's national security.

What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

How could an environmental organization initiate or respond to a piece like this?

How could an environmental organization shape the content of a piece like this?

How might journalists have used social media while putting this piece together?

# More than 320 groups seek more time to comment on Trump environmental law changes

BY RACHEL FRAZIN - 01/24/20 05:23 PM EST

41 COMMENTS

## Just In...

**Michelle Obama wins Grammy for audio recording of memoir**  
IN THE KNOW — 22M 27S AGO

**Obama mourns 'heartbreaking' loss of Kobe Bryant and daughter Gianna**  
BLOG BRIEFING ROOM — 32M AGO

**Poll: Biden leads in Iowa ahead of caucuses**  
CAMPAIGN — 33M 12S AGO

**Why Republicans may lose Texas**  
OPINION — 42M 42S AGO

**Raptors, Spurs run out shot clock in honor of Kobe Bryant**  
BLOG BRIEFING ROOM — 48M 18S AGO

**Three women accuse Michigan state lawmaker of sexual harassment**  
STATE WATCH — 47M 33S AGO

**Greta Thunberg slams AP photo that cropped out Ugandan activist Vanessa Nakate**  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT — 53M 46S AGO

**The Memo: Impeachment dominates final Iowa sprint**  
CAMPAIGN — 1H 19M AGO

[VIEW ALL](#)

42 SHARES

SHARE
 TWEET



© Getty Images

A coalition of more than 320 groups will ask the White House to extend its comment period on planned changes to a bedrock environmental law.

President Trump this month announced the [proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#), which would allow greater industry involvement in environmental reviews of projects and reduce the role climate change plays in those assessments.

On Monday, the coalition will send a letter to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) asking for the extension.



"Currently, the Trump administration is offering an extremely short 60-day public comment period and mere two public hearings," said a statement from the groups.

A CEQ spokesperson told The Hill in a statement that the council has "engaged in extensive public outreach" and is "considering additional opportunities to engage the public."

"CEQ received over 12,500 comments, which have informed CEQ's proposed rule," the spokesperson said. "We will evaluate all comments and consider extension requests as we receive them."

Major opponents of the changes have included environmental groups, who argue that it would allow the government to turn a blind eye when projects emit large quantities of greenhouse gases. They are also among those asking for the longer comment period.

**60% OFF**  
 - Comfort X Soft -

Newchic

## Most Popular

- Fox's Wallace confronts Dershowitz...**  
944 SHARES
- Trump's troubles won't end with a...**  
833 SHARES
- Republican senator: Trump's Schiff...**  
805 SHARES
- Schiff says Trump tweet is ...**  
557 SHARES
- Officials confirm fourth US case...**

What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

How could an environmental organization initiate or respond to a piece like this?

How could an environmental organization shape the content of a piece like this?

How might journalists have used social media while putting this piece together?

# Conservation Easement Scam Proves Resilient Despite IRS Pressure



Steve Dubb  
January 6, 2020

Print

f 13 | t 4 | in | 17 SHARES



[PeggyLester76 \[CC BY-SA\]](#)

January 3, 2020; ProPublica

Conservation easements can be highly useful for land preservation. As Peter Elkind of ProPublica explains, with a conservation easement, a landowner agrees to permanently protect land from development. In exchange for forgoing the ability to cash in on the land's market value, the landowner is entitled to deduct from her tax bill the difference between the appraised value of the land if sold on the market and the reduced financial value of the land that abides by the condition of the easement.

It seems like—and often can be—a great deal for all concerned. The public doesn't need to buy the land, the only public expense being the tax deduction; typically, a nonprofit [conservation land trust](#) acts as a third-party validator and maintains the land for its easement-restricted use. In Maine, for example, 2.3 million acres, which works out to about 11.5 percent of all state land, are preserved through such mechanisms. That's a million more acres than the federal government owns statewide.

An article published by Yale's *Environment 360* estimates that 40 million acres nationally are preserved by such mechanisms, [more acreage than exists in national parks in the Lower 48](#) (which, outside Alaska, contain about 29.9 million acres). It is all pretty remarkable, particularly given that the conversation easement itself is only [about 40 years old](#).

But what if you can juice that appraisal value? Since the land is not actually sold on the market—that is the point of the easement, after all—opportunities for abuse are rife. This is particularly the case when you have what is known as a syndicated conservation easement.

azavea  
SUMMER of MAPS  
Geospatial data meets cutting-edge analysis.  
Apply for a grant now.

WEBINAR  
Workplace Violence and Intruder Response Strategies for Nonprofits  
VIEW NOW! GUIDEDONE

## RELATED

Religious Nonprofits Evade IRS Disclosure Rules by Claiming "Church" Status

By [Carole Levine](#) January 21, 2020

Taming Tax Incentives: A Leading Economist Calls for Change

By [Steve Dubb](#) January 5, 2020

Judge Finds that Savers Misled Public about Its Giving, Delivers Mixed Ruling

By [Sarah Miller](#) November 11, 2019

Conflict of Interest: Recusal Is Not Enough

By [Veronetta Walker](#) November 3, 2019

Opioid Lawsuit Settlements May Work to the Benefit of Big Pharma

By [Sarah Miller](#) September 23, 2019

California Goes After Valuation of Non-cash Donations

What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

How could an environmental organization initiate or respond to a piece like this?

How could an environmental organization shape the content of a piece like this?

How might journalists have used social media while putting this piece together?

# Jackson water customers asked to boil, conserve water

Low water flow to city treatment plant reported, city officials say

156 Shares   

WAPT 16 abc

Updated: 4:22 PM CST Jan 24, 2020

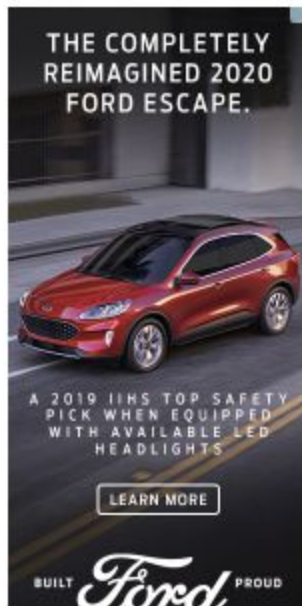
 **Troy Johnson**  
3 p.m. Anchor/Reporter



SHOW TRANSCRIPT

**JACKSON, Miss.** — Jackson water customers are asked to boil and conserve water until further notice, city officials said Friday.

The city's primary water treatment plant, the O.B. Curtis Water Treatment Plant, is experiencing low flow to the plant, which has impeded its ability to produce sufficient reserve water for the system.



City officials believe debris from recent storms and flooding could have caused a blockage in the system. Divers are at the plant working to find the source of the problem, city officials said.

The system should recover as the reserve is replenished. O.B. Curtis and J.H. Fewell water treatment plants are currently working on all possible strategies to restore pressure as soon as possible, city officials said.



What kind of piece is this (Hard News, Breaking News, Feature or Soft News, Investigative News, Opinion or “Op Ed,” Editorial)?

At the media outlet, who was involved in putting this piece together?

Title	Role They Played (If Any)
Beat Reporter	
Copy Editor/Video Editor:	
Editor-in-Chief, Managing editor, etc.	
Editorial/Opinion Editor:	
Enterprise/Investigative Reporter	
General Assignment Reporter/Local News Reporter	
News or Assignment Editor	

How could an environmental organization initiate or respond to a piece like this?

How could an environmental organization shape the content of a piece like this?

How might journalists have used social media while putting this piece together?