Keeping Up Momentum: Advice for Early Career Scientists in Policy-making and Community Science


What barriers do scientists feel when engaging with community leaders?

- 71% feel unsure of how to start
- 69% feel they lack policy knowledge
- 60% feel they lack time
- 54% don’t know what to expect

Reach out to community leaders, government and agency officials

Relationships are built in many ways
The best way to start will depend on your goal, community, government, and culture

- Attend a public event with decision-makers
- Ask them to talk to your team, lab, or class
- Reach out to your professional group (like EGU Policy) – they might have someone in their network!
- Become a scientific expert for UNESCO, the EU, Thriving Earth Exchange, & more

Your science policy ally might not hold the highest rank. Staff members have a direct line to decision-makers and can make magic happen.

Build relationships with other scientists

Arizona Science Policy Network’s (AzSPN) goal is to connect scientists & decision-makers

Don’t go it alone, bring a colleague.

Learn from science policy and community science experts

- Learn from experts through seminars, training events, and short courses
- The best way to learn and build confidence is by doing

When communicating with decision-makers and community leaders...

1) Your audience should never have to ask, “Why does this matter?” – provide clear and concise context
2) Your science is only addressing one issue – Science is used to inform policy, but must balance with socioeconomic, political, etc. priorities
3) Plan as much as you can, but be flexible – Be prepared with a 1-minute pitch introducing yourself and your message
4) Actually listen to what they’re saying - They’re an expert on the problem, you’re an expert on the science

Keep up contact! One-time connections fade and will have limited impact

It took time for ally Legislative Assistant Robert Nolan to reach out to us regularly for expertise

For more information and help to engage in science policy: @CaitlynAHall @AzSciPolNet