

Writers Tours (Outdoor and Travel)

Outdoor and travel writers could add an extra jewel to your lake's water safety crown and boost the Corps of Engineers image at the same time. And, like many ideas in this guide, it's easy. "Who are these writers, what do they do and where do they come from?" you might be asking, about now. They should be divided into two categories: staff and freelance. And, subdivided into magazine, daily newspaper and Sunday supplement publications. Both the outdoor and travel writers fit into all those classifications. Then writer tours are totally separate, yet.

Outdoor newspaper staff writers usually are found on large metro-level dailies. Wildlife coverage is usually added to their area of expertise. These photo journalists usually have a certain amount of space to fill during a 40-hour work week. It is possible to get them out to cover your water safety activities.

Outdoor free lancers. These writers and photographers produce copy/photos for money. Most have a few special pubs that buy their material on a regular basis, but they write from a home-based operation. Most of the time you will be able to distinguish them by their byline on the stories. Staff writers will have "Staff writer" or something similar. Freelance writers have a variety of bylines, but usually it will be "Special to" whatever paper you are reading. Sometimes it will be the writer's name and nothing else.

Travel staff writers are employed on the very large newspaper staffs, only. They cover scenic, overall, year-round events, and maybe one special photo opportunity activity. Normally, free lancers fill the travel columns. In fact, many retired senior citizens who formerly worked for a newspaper or magazine, make a few bucks

with travel article.

To make contact with these folks, simply call the newspaper and they will tell you how to get in touch with them. Some will take your name and telephone number, while some publications will give you their home address and telephone number. Then, simply call them and provide background. Remember, travel writers write about areas, not water safety activities. Keep in mind what you want them to add to their copy and during their visit show them what you are doing to prevent drownings or boating accidents. If they are unique enough, you will wedge it in somehow. Getting these writers to the lake when some water safety activities are in progress will help your chances of obtaining water safety coverage.

Outdoor magazines employ a few staff writers and freelancers. Call the individual magazines with your suggestions. They might assign a staffer or call the free lancer to cover your event.

Writers' Tours

Take all the aforementioned reporters and lump them into one traveling association. There's your "Writers' Tour." Call the large daily nearest you. Ask the outdoor or travel editor who is the association's president or vice-president. Then call that person and see what is on their agenda for the year. Make your lake pitch. A faxed data sheet might be immediately required. Hopefully, the person will tentatively pen your lake to the tour schedule. After checking with the other members you could receive a visit from two, three, up to six or eight writers ... at one time.

Each writer will want to write about

different areas of the countryside surrounding the lake, lake activities, good fishing spots, and other points of interest. It's time to enlist the services of the local chambers of commerce, economic development association, lake council, fishing clubs, skiing clubs, etc.

Once you have the date, time and number of writers, start your planning. Probably they will want one lunch together, and then go to the winds for their special story. You will need to divide the group into their area of interests and name group leaders. A few will bring their spouses. Remember, the tours last from two to four days. That's a lot of events to create on their tours. Also, the writers will make their own travel arrangements to and from your assembly point. You and your group will be responsible for their ground transportation during their stay, thus the reason to enlist organizations for help. During their visit, inform the local media and maybe they will report on the reporters.

After the first successful writers' tour is history, it could be time to bring in other regional writers. Your association contact should be able to provide names, addresses and telephone numbers of the other groups around the nation.

Always get copies of the published articles. They add something extra to your lake's history. Picture yourself in this situation. The mail arrives at your office and one large envelope has a dozen copies of a colorful magazine... with four or five pages about your lake. Think of that. It could happen. Has the pony express rider stopped by your mailbox today? Good luck with future packages!