

Lake Councils

How you are probably throwing your hands up into the air saying, “I wish I could do all these things, but there are only 24-hours in a day. There’s no way to stretch the clock.

“Time, I must have more time.”

“Money, I must have more money.”

“People, I must have more people.”

Don’t worry help is on its way. Here’s an idea that will provide all three: time, money and people ... Lake Councils.

There are many people who, believe it or not, are searching for ways to get involved with lake activities. They are sitting in front of the tube or catching cabin fever waiting on your call. Does that seem ridiculous? Read on.

Here is a listing of folks whom we are talking about, people who:

1. live around the lake,
2. boat on the lake,
3. fish the lake,
4. develop the lake,
5. are owners of marina/docks on the lake,
6. visit the lake,
7. have retired near the lake, with little to do.

First, create an organizing plan and present it to your boss. There will probably be other lake-related splinter groups that need a cause, something to do. You are filling their void, giving them that “something to do.”

Solicit the support of the other State and Federal agencies that have jurisdiction on

the lake. They may co-sponsor this meeting to form a lake council. These agencies also want to save lives on the lake. Probably 99 percent will say “yes”.

Notify the elected officials personally. They probably will attend the first meeting or at least send a representative.

Inform the known lake “movers and shakers” what your plans are and enlist their support. Find out when will be the best time to conduct the first meeting. Probably the most available evenings will be Tuesdays or Thursdays. Next, where will you have your first group meeting? Normally, the most centrally located place. Maybe your office or conference room will be best if they are large enough. In addition, you will have better control if it is at your facility. Inform the folks through every possible method word-of-mouth, e-mails, radio, TV, cable TV, newspaper news releases, marina newsletters, flyers around the lake, etc.

You may luck out and find a marina or group willing to cater your meeting. Ensure you invite the media.

The meeting. Start the meeting at the exact time or very shortly after the appointed time. These people are looking for something short and to the point. Not something long and drawn out. Accommodate them. Have an agenda and try to stick close to it, but have a question and answer period at the end of the meeting.

Welcome everyone. Introduce the government officials, elected first, and organizations. Immediately tell them why they are there. Maybe show water-related charts or graphs on a board or slide showing number of drownings, water fatalities and boating accidents over the years. This is your most important time. You might even want to create a small handout showing

these sad stats. Then, you say something like this, “This is the reason why we need YOU to save lives on Lake Umptyfrats and make this lake a better place for YOU, your grandchildren and our visitors. Will you help us?”

Next, some of the other officials probably will want to add their support to what you have already said. Elected officials love to get in on a good cause like water safety.

Now, what is it you want them to actually DO? Whatever it is, now’s the time to lay it out for the group.

Do you want to have officers? This must be given some forethought, because once you relinquish the leadership, your specific goals may not be the goals of the president or the group. But, on the other hand, you may want them to take charge and lead on. And, you will be the idea producer.

If you want the group to take charge and you assist or provide guidance, then ask for

volunteers to be the president, etc. During your very first planning session in your office, think of the best person you know of for the job and somehow plant the seed. This person must be a can-do, will-do leader. Not a follower, preferably a good speaker.

However, let’s say you want to guide this group. Then you will probably want to ask for volunteers to lead the different committees you have selected. This way, everything focuses back to you.

There are so many projects this group will help you with, but remember, know what you want them to do, before even thinking about forming the group. If this type of group is not active, it will surely die. It will require more leadership on your part than actually accomplishing projects. The group and their committees can be your eyes, your ears, your feet, your doers and your funding partners.

Is it council forming time at your lake? Best of luck whichever method you use.