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Remarks at SAF Convention, Education and Communications Working Group Program,
Part 3: “Developing Relationships with Local Media”
Fort Worth, Texas, 10/21/05

The most important thing is that you’re doing, or supporting, good work.
Next is that EVERYTHING is about networking and human relationships. Every one of us can constantly improve in these skills.

Persistence trumps talent and everything else. Any forester with a passion for his/her work can develop an ability to share that passion with others.

Many, if not most, foresters are introverts. However, even the most introverted people can become very effective at outreach simply by trial and error.

Although you sometimes have to play defense, it’s more fun and often more effective to play offense in the media with your story or idea.

Give up any preconceived notions about media bias. If you’re not willing to risk poor coverage, you have no chance of getting good coverage. Most media people just want to get it right – there’s no grand conspiracy out there.

The media needs conflict to create interest and advertising dollars. Don’t shy away from conflict just because you are uncomfortable about it. It’s not acceptable to avoid conflict if you’re doing or supporting good work.

The Internet is a new form of mass media. But the underlying contest of ideas and viewpoints is perpetual, and it’s what you have to be involved in, whether by print, broadcast or web media.

We all love stories, so you need to tell your story. If your story is compelling, you’ll have a better chance of attracting media interest.

You can use emotion to emphasize a point or to demonstrate your passion, but never lie or distort the truth. Your credibility lies in not burning any bridges.

Reporters and politicians are people. Treat them with courtesy and respect, and you’re likely to get the same. You’d be surprised at how many reporters, even in big cities, answer their emails and phone calls. You build relationships one person, one little success, at a time.

If you ask a reporter to get together for a cup of coffee, and he/she says no, you’ve lost nothing. If he/she says yes, you’ve potentially gained a great deal.

Oftentimes reporters or editors that you’ve dealt with can help you get needed feedback about your media strengths and weaknesses. Don’t be afraid to ask for their help. That’s part of developing relationships.

Don’t be troubled about “winning” every media encounter. You’re in this for the long haul.

Our job is to talk to people in places like Los Angeles, Atlanta and New York. We have to communicate in ways that they can understand. To some extent we’re cultural emissaries to an urban majority disadvantaged by its separation from the land. They need our help!

Don’t let others define what forestry is all about. Enough of that.