

# Explore Your World! **BIODIVERSITY MONTH**

## **Regional Media Guide**

Central media relations' activities are being organized to promote national media coverage of the first ever US *Biodiversity Month*. Local and national media are interested in learning about biodiversity and what events are being held to spread the message about biodiversity issues.

***This document is a guide to how you can attract media coverage for your event.***

It provides information and resources for contacting local media and helping reporters cover your event. It also contains information on the promotional activities the International Biodiversity Observation Year (IBOY) is planning to support *Explore Your World! Biodiversity Month*.

### **What Media Coverage is Planned?**

IBOY will be contacting national media (newspapers, magazines, TV and radio) to let them know what events are being held across the USA.

In early April we will contact national media with a 'Save the Date' announcement that will include a listing of all local events taking place.

A series of launch events are being planned for the first week of May at major national institutions in Washington, DC (including the National Academy of Sciences, National Geographic Society Headquarters, and the Smithsonian Institution). National media will be asked to attend these events and interview the *Biodiversity Month* spokespeople there. Information on local events taking place across America will also be available to media at these events.

At the end of May we will report the achievements of *Biodiversity Month* events to the national media, using the reports that you send us. Central media 'wrap-up' activities will be organized in association with a BioBlitz organized by the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History.

Throughout April and May the IBOY Secretariat will be on hand to assist you in contacting and providing resources to interested media. IBOY will also promote the *Biodiversity Month* website, which will be constantly updated with information on central events and products, and with information on your events as you send it to us.

**Local Events Promotion**

Local events across America will be included in the list of events sent to the media by IBOY but it is usually more effective if local event coordinators directly contact their local TV, radio and print media to ask for coverage of their events. Your organization or committee may already have contacts in the media, but in case you don't, here are some guidelines.

***Getting organized***

- (1) Have your event finalized by the beginning of April and then approach your local media so you give them enough time to fully cover your event.
- (2) Designate a media contact person who is responsible for contacting the media and who is able to talk about the event as well as coordinate other potential spokespersons, photographs etc. The media contact person must have access to a phone, fax, computer and printer.
- (3) You may like to have a dedicated spokesperson that is not the media contact person. This spokesperson may be a specialist in the area of biodiversity or the event coordinator.
- (4) You may like to coordinate with the IBOY Secretariat who can provide a spokesperson on *Biodiversity Month*.

***WHO TO CONTACT:*****The media:**

You will need a list of the local media in your area including:

- Associated Press, Reuters and other news service regional bureaus
- Newspapers and magazines (including features, science, editorial page and Op-Ed editors)
- Public Radio and Television
- Cable news and cable talk shows (urge local access or public access live or documentary

coverage of both the event and pre-event notices)

- Radio talk show hosts with high rated morning and afternoon drive time shows
- Monthly, club and specialist magazine editors
- School newsletters and education department newsletters
- Internet pages
- Newspaper publishers and cable/broadcast managers (especially if the local event has obtained or is seeking media sponsorship).

Here are some internet directories to help you find local media bureaus and reporters:

- Local Gannett Newspapers - <http://www.gannett.com/map/propmap.htm>
- Local National Public Radio stations - <http://www.npr.org/members/>
- Local Public Broadcast Service stations - <http://www.pbs.org>
- Local NBC stations - [http://www.nbc.com/nbc/header/Local\\_Stations/](http://www.nbc.com/nbc/header/Local_Stations/)
- Local Associated Press Bureaus - <http://www.ap.org/pages/aptoday/map2.html>
- Local Reuters Bureaus - <http://reuters.custhelp.com>

Many local media outlets will not only cover your event by featuring it as a news story but they will usually list your event in their 'what's on' section leading up to your event date.

**Local celebrities:**

You may like to ask local sporting heroes, the Mayor, or the Governor to come to your event and participate in a news story for the local media.

**WHAT TO SEND THE MEDIA:****Media Kit**

You will have to make up a media kit to send to your media contacts. Inside this kit you could include:

- A media release about your local event (SEE BELOW)
- Images about your local event (electronic images if you email your media kit; 35mm slides if you mail your media kit)
- Promotional materials about your local event (e.g. posters, flyers, articles)
- The national media release for *Biodiversity Month* (downloadable from <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/iboy/biomonth/pr/030902.html>)
- The national *Biodiversity Month* poster (downloadable from <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/iboy/biomonth/posters.html>)

**Writing a Media Release About Your Local Event**

Media releases are the simplest way to get your information/message across to journalists.

A template release for local Biodiversity Month events, with places for you to insert information is found on page 5 of this Media Guide.

If you prefer to write your own release, here are some points to keep in mind:

Keep your media release to one page if possible and never more than three pages. Always include the date of the release, contact information for your media contact person and a headline. Send it directly to the journalist you are dealing with.

You should explain in the first paragraph that your event is part of the national *Biodiversity Month* and reference the accompanying national

*Biodiversity Month* media release. Most journalists see hundreds of media releases and requests each day. Explaining in simple and short terms that your event is part of a national event will help them understand and support your event.

Your release should contain:

- **Who** – is presenting and participating in the event
- **What** – your event is about, promoting it as part of *Biodiversity Month*
- **Why** – you are holding the event
- **Where** – the event is to be held
- **When** – the event is to be held
- **How** – the general public and the media can find out more information

There are six basic formatting and content elements for a press release:

- **Release Statement:** either “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” or “EMBARGOED UNTIL: TIME, DAY, MONTH, YEAR” These words should appear in the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead and should capitalize every letter.
- **Contact Information:** Skip a line or two after release statement and list the name, title, telephone, and fax numbers of your media contact person.
- **Headline:** skip two lines after your contact information and use a boldface type.
- **Dateline:** this should be the city your press release is issued from and the date you are mailing your release.
- **Lead Paragraph:** this should grasp the readers’ attention and contain the relevant information to your message including the who, what, where, when, why and how.
- **Text:** the main body of your press release where your message should fully develop.

**An Op-Ed Piece for Newspapers**

Your event organizer or spokesperson may wish to write an Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed) piece in advance of your event, describing the importance of biodiversity and showing how the local events contributes to conserving biodiversity and the *Biodiversity Month* objectives. You should only offer one local paper an original Op-Ed piece, so if you have several different local print media you may consider producing several different Op-Ed pieces, perhaps written by different staff or committee members that demonstrate different aspects of the event.

**Contacting the Media**

When contacting the media:

- Begin as soon as possible.
- If you do not already have a contact, phone the media office and ask to speak to the person who covers environment and science issues, local events, or education, etc., depending on your slant and focus. Explain that you will be sending them a release about your event and ask if they would prefer it by mail or email (different reporters have different preferences).
- Once you have made contact with the correct person you should send him/her your Media Kit.
- To ensure that your event receives the best possible media coverage, it is recommended that you send your media release by mail on Thursday or Friday so that it arrives at the media office on Monday or Tuesday. Similarly, if your contact prefers to receive information by email, send them the electronic release on Monday or Tuesday.
- Follow up a week later with a phone call, encourage him/her to provide coverage and ask if they need any more information or logistical help. Ask them to list your event in any upcoming events listings, as well as cover it. This way you will get pre-event and

post-event publicity.

- Continue to follow-up, to inform core media about major new developments with your local event and national events such as the Biodiversity Month kick-off. Follow-up is important – sending the press kit offers both an introduction to the major story and a reason to follow up.

**Special Needs for TV & Radio Interviews**

When dealing with radio and TV journalists you may need to keep the following in mind:

- Will the TV station need any footage of biodiversity issues – if yes on what format and length
- Will the TV and or radio interviews be recorded live – if so have a well briefed spokesperson available
- How long with the interviews be for and what sort of points will they want to cover.
- Will the interviews be conducted in the studio or at your event
- Don't forget to include phone numbers for listeners to find out more information about local biodiversity issues
- You may want to practice speaking about your event and local issues before you speak live on TV and radio

For more information, please contact *Biodiversity Month* and IBOY at Email: [info@biodiversitymonth.org](mailto:info@biodiversitymonth.org), Tel: (970) 491 1984

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**Press Release Template**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or EMBARGORED UNTIL: TIME, DATE.**

**Contact:**

**Name of media contact person**

**Title**

**Telephone**

**Fax**

**HEADLINE**

**YOUR CITY, STATE** - May 2001 is the first ever national *Biodiversity Month* and **(YOUR ORGANIZATION)** is taking part in the celebrations by organizing a **(YOUR EVENT TITLE)** on **(DATE OF YOUR EVENT)** at **(LOCATION OF YOUR EVENT)**. The **(YOUR ORGANIZATION)** joins museums, botanic gardens, community groups and schools from Connecticut to California, who are holding events for *Explore Your World! Biodiversity Month* in May 2001, to raise awareness of America's biodiversity (see enclosed or [www.BiodiversityMonth.org](http://www.BiodiversityMonth.org) for more information on Biodiversity Month).

**GIVE MORE DETAILS OF YOUR EVENT**