A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy

Laura Vernon
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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE
AMALGA BARRENS WETLANDS CONTROVERSY

by

Laura Vernon

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Theory and Practice of Professional Communication

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2013
ABSTRACT

A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the
Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy

by

Laura Vernon, Doctor of Philosophy
Utah State University, 2013

Major Professor: Dr. Keith Grant-Davie
Department: English

This study is a rhetorical analysis of strategic communication in the Amalga
Barrens wetlands controversy during the 1990s. The Bridgerland Audubon Society
(BAS) in Cache Valley, Utah, was able to influence a change in public policy that
removed the unique wetlands from consideration as a possible reservoir site for water
taken from the Bear River. BAS led a successful grassroots effort by being civil, targeting
specific individuals who had influence with the Utah legislature, focusing less on the
environment and more on cost arguments that mattered to decision-makers, creating a
portfolio of arguments grounded in scientific and economic data, and educating the
community. BAS’s experience may be helpful to other environmental groups that are
trying to lead efforts in their own communities. Although the strategies presented cannot
be generalized to fit all groups and situations, they may serve as a starting point.

(163 pages)
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy

Laura Vernon conducts a study to discover how, against the odds, the Bridgerland Audubon Society (BAS), located in Cache Valley, Utah, influenced a change in public policy regarding the Amalga Barrens reservoir proposal. In 1991, the state of Utah proposed developing the Bear River in northern Utah and constructing an off-stream storage facility (a reservoir) on the wetlands known as the Barrens near the town of Amalga. The Barrens served as a bird habitat for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. In the late 1990s, BAS led a grassroots effort to remove the Barrens as a proposed site from the Bear River Development Act. The law was amended in 2002.

The study is a rhetorical analysis grounded in the following four theorists/theories:

- Aristotle’s theory that appeals to ethos (credibility and authority), pathos (emotions, values, beliefs, and attitudes), and logos (facts, logic, rational thinking, and sound reasoning) are persuasive
- L. Bitzer’s theory of rhetorical situations, which posits that situations can create an exigency to which rhetorical discourse can respond
- S. Senecah’s Trinity of Voice theory, which posits that good environmental decisions can be made when participatory processes promote access (opportunities for voices to be heard), standing (respect for all perspectives), and influence (consideration of all stakeholders’ ideas)
- S. Daniels and G. Walker’s collaborative learning approach that operates on the premise that social learning is fundamental to good public policy decisions

Vernon uses primary research methods to answer her overarching research question: Against the odds, how did BAS influence a change in public policy regarding the Amalga Barrens wetlands dam proposal when similar groups dealing with similar issues have failed or met with mixed results? Her rhetorical analysis includes three types of materials: an archive of BAS documents, an archive of newspaper articles, and transcriptions from interviews she conducted with key players in the controversy.

Vernon meets her research objective by discovering and discussing the five communication strategies that appear to be significant factors in helping BAS remove the Barrens wetlands from consideration by the legislature as a reservoir site for Bear River water. The five communication strategies are as follows: (1) be civil; (2) target specific individuals with influence in the legislature; (3) focus on cost with decision-makers; (4) create a portfolio of arguments grounded in data; and (5) educate the locals and influential individuals. These strategies may be helpful to environmental groups managing issues in their own communities.

Laura Vernon
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- My students for helping me find my life’s purpose
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- Stanley for loving me unconditionally
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Laura Vernon
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Wetlands are very rare in Utah, covering only 0.2% of Utah’s land area (Utah Department of Natural Resources, n.d.). Throughout the year, wetlands provide a unique environment that supports a variety of plant and wild life, including hundreds of thousands of migrating shorebirds. Utah’s wetlands are often found in the form of marshes, and migrating shorebirds depend on the marshes for food, water, and shelter as they rest from their journeys. Unfortunately, Utah’s wetlands are declining in terms of their numbers and health due to urban development, which is a common phenomenon in places across the United States where wetlands are more abundant but equally under attack. The demand for water to supply new housing and business developments are threatening wetlands, and activities associated with oil and gas extraction are damaging wetlands beyond repair. While the loss or damage of wetlands may seem an inconsequential environmental impact, it actually has tentacles that reach deep into a community’s ability to thrive economically, socially, and environmentally. The valuable open land surrounding a wetland is often used by profitable farmers for grazing. A wetland can be a favorite community spot for fishing, hunting, and recreation. Likewise, community members of all ages and interests visit a wetland to learn about plant and wild life. A wetland can also play a key role in trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, and removing pollution (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2013). Despite the many benefits of wetlands, threats continue to plague them everywhere, and their future is uncertain.
Many community environmental groups recognize this uncertain future and take action to protect wetlands from threats. However, these groups are not always successful. In fact, many of them have failed or have met with mixed success largely due to lack of coordination and unity, lack of engagement on both the left and the right side of the political spectrum, and lack of ideas that promote sustainability (Burns & LeMoyne, 2001, p. 34). Scholars studying ineffective environmental movements have characterized them as fragmented, casting too wide a net to change too much all at once, and competing with each other and other social issues for attention, and they also argue that only a limited number of issues can be resolved favorably under these conditions (Burns & LeMoyne, 2001, p. 27). As a last resort, many environmental battles end up in court where issues are drawn out for years and costs get out of control. Negotiations shut down, disagreements raise tempers, and the only thing at work is the legal system.

One such situation took place in Utah in 1996 when the Utah Department of Transportation proposed to build the Legacy Highway on the east side of the Great Salt Lake to alleviate traffic congestion on Interstate-15. A portion of the proposed route would impact about 100 acres of wetlands. A citizens group called Utahns for Better Transportation (UBET) formed to fight the proposed route and to mitigate wetland loss. Struggling to gain traction, the group eventually joined with the Sierra Club, and their efforts took a sharp turn toward a legal course of action. Starting in 2001, the Sierra Club and UBET sued the State of Utah several times to halt construction of the highway. After moving through the court of appeals, the environmental groups eventually won a ruling in 2002, requiring the state to offset the wetland loss with a new 2,100-acre wetland and wildlife nature preserve. Still concerned about the project, the groups filed another
lawsuit in late 2004. To avoid another lengthy legal scramble, Utah’s governor convened a meeting with the Utah Department of Transportation, the Sierra Club, and UBET to foster an agreement and settle the case out of court. In late 2005, the parties agreed to an additional 125 acres of additional nature preserve, for a total of 2,225 acres. Construction moved forward and the highway opened in 2008. By the time all was said and done, 12 years had passed—most of it in legal wrangling. Indeed, in the end, the environment won and the groups were successful at negotiating a fair resolution. However, that resolution came at an enormous price. Taxpayers paid millions of dollars in delay penalties to the construction company, and citizen environmental groups took a hit as uncooperative, contentious, and litigious. While it was a victory for the wetland specifically, it was a loss for environmentalism generally—a loss of reputation, cooperation, respect, and civility.

Unfortunately, the legal system is how many environmental issues are resolved today. But is there a better way, and has any community-based environmental advocacy group ever been successful at protecting the environment outside a courtroom? The answer is yes, and that successful group’s story is the subject of this dissertation. To be sure, it is instructive to look at both failures and successes of environmental movements—to examine what is and is not working. Across the country, environmental issues continue to top the list of citizen concerns, making politicians, scientists, and industry leaders take notice and address the concerns. The interest will only increase as the United States and other countries continue to deal with climate change, population growth, clean water, and threatened plant and animal habitats in dwindling forests and wetlands. Environmental problems are not going away, and neither are the citizen groups working to solve them. While some community-based environmental groups are making
strides to be heard and have influence, many of them still struggle due to lack of resources, primarily money and strategic know-how. As environmental problems become more complex and widespread, the strategies to resolve them likewise need to become more complex and comprehensive. It is a daunting task indeed.

One community-based environmental group in Utah strategically managed, however, to overcome the odds and meet an environmental problem head-on without falling victim to ineffectiveness. The Bridgerland Audubon Society’s (BAS) success story about saving a wetland from water development by changing public policy is indeed rare, but it can be duplicated, or at least it can aid as a starting point to help small environmental groups reframe conflict resolution as cooperative and civil rather than contentious and destructive. The strategies BAS employed may be universal enough to serve as a model for groups like it dealing with a variety of environmental issues in their own communities. So, how did BAS succeed where others failed? This dissertation examines that question from a strategic communication perspective, using the theories of rhetoric, collaborative learning, and Trinity of Voice to guide the analyses. Below is a brief explanation of each theory. A deeper discussion of these theories is provided in the Literature Review chapter.

- Rhetorical Theory: Aristotle’s (2007) persuasive appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos and L. Bitzer’s (1992) examination of rhetorical situations inform my analyses of how BAS developed its credibility among opposing stakeholders, appropriately framed its scientific and economic arguments for its varied audiences, and relied on community and environmental values to engage citizens in the public participation process.
- Collaborative Learning: A collaborative learning approach to working through environmental conflict was developed by S. Daniels and G. Walker (2001). The premise of their theory is that social learning by all stakeholders and respectful consideration of differing values are fundamental to good public policy decisions (p. xiii). Using this lens, I examine how BAS created safe places where collaborative learning among all stakeholders could take place.

- Trinity of Voice: Developed by S. Senecah (2004), Trinity of Voice is about building trust to enhance community cohesiveness, which in turn results in good environmental decisions (p. 23). The three points of the trinity are access, standing, and influence. Using this lens, I examine how BAS was able to gain access to key policymakers to voice its concerns, achieve esteem with them as a legitimate stakeholder, and have its ideas respectfully considered by them.

BAS’s story has much to tell us about how to strategically manage an environmental conflict and change public policy in favor of environmental protection instead of going to court. Lawsuits may be a necessary course of action after all else has been done, but I argue that lawsuits can be avoided through cooperation, collaborative learning, civility, and strategic communication as shown through the actions of BAS and an engaged citizenry. My analyses demonstrate the following three guiding principles that when implemented can enhance a community’s effort to succeed at making a difference:

- Environmental issues are also political and economic issues. They do not exist in a vacuum. Community-based environmental groups must learn about the political and economic matters surrounding the environmental issue, develop arguments
that clearly address these matters, and engage with political and economic leaders in civil dialogue.

- Civil dialogue, moreover, is the key to collaborative learning. During the collaborative learning process, all stakeholders must be engaged, including proponents and opponents as well as technical experts and laypeople, and all views, values, and levels of understanding must be respected. Collaborative learning fosters involvement and cooperation where consensus toward a fair solution or decision is likely to take place.

- A strategic communication approach is critical to success. Such an approach includes communicating with a variety of targeted audiences, developing arguments and delivering those arguments in ways that are the most persuasive and useful to these audiences. It is important to understand that communication is not a one-size-fits-all approach. An environmental group must develop a consistent message for each audience and communicate it often.

The remainder of this introduction details the specific rationale and theoretical underpinnings of my dissertation. In the pages that follow, I discuss the context of my research project and the research problem I am trying to solve. I provide background on BAS and the Amalga Barrens wetlands, which is the focus of my research. I conclude with an outline of the chapters that compose my dissertation. In Chapter II, I go into more detail of how my research contributes to the more diverse and dynamic conversations about environmental rhetoric, strategic communication, and professional and technical communication theories and practices.
Research Rationale and Purpose

This dissertation is a rhetorical analysis of strategic communication in the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy during the 1990s. The purpose of this dissertation is to better understand the rhetorical strategies BAS employed to successfully remove the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a possible dam site. BAS is a community-based environmental advocacy group in Cache Valley, Utah. For approximately 10 years, it worked to remove the Amalga Barrens wetlands from a list of possible dam sites that would provide future water to the Salt Lake Valley. The controversial dam site was being considered as part of the Utah State Legislature’s 1991 Bear River Development Act, which called for water development of the Bear River. The Amalga Barrens is a wetland and bird sanctuary located four miles west of Smithfield and 10 miles south of the Utah-Idaho state line. In the mid-1980s, the Utah Division of Water Resources began considering the Barrens as a site for water storage pumped from the Bear River. The proposal received extensive study, matched by extensive objections from environmental groups, taxpayers, and local landowners. Finally, after more than 10 years of debate, the Utah State Legislature removed the “Barrens Dam” from consideration.

During this controversy, there were many stakeholders at play. For example, the Utah Rivers Council was heavily involved in arguing against any dam on the Bear River. Their rhetoric included both the Amalga Barrens and the proposed Honeyville dam site in neighboring Box Elder County. Furthermore, in the late 1990s, government officials in Cache County and in counties along the Wasatch Front pushed hard for a water conservancy district that in theory would manage water distribution from the Amalga Barrens site should the storage facility ever be built. Although the water conservancy
district was never a part of BAS’s rhetoric, there was still much community speculation that the water conservancy district was a front for support for the Amalga Barrens dam site. Thus, there were many factors at play, pushing and pulling the rhetoric in all directions. I examine BAS’s rhetorical strategies because in the mix of this complicated situation BAS’s rhetoric appears to be the tipping point that saved the Amalga Barrens from water development. BAS focused only on the Barrens, never on Honeyville, and it focused on environmental damage to the wetlands if the reservoir was built. Evidence of BAS’s effective rhetoric was captured in a newspaper article that quotes the then-director of the Utah Division of Water Resources as follows: “The Barrens site was scrapped because of environmental issues . . . We’re not looking at that anymore” (Allen, 2001).

To complicate this situation even more was the language used to refer to the Amalga Barrens site. Many people and organizations, including the media, involved in this controversy referred to the Amalga Barrens as a dam site, but in actuality, the site was proposed to be an off-river water storage facility—a reservoir. The meaning behind “dam” and “reservoir” is one of the language issues I explore in my dissertation. For my purposes in this introduction, I refer to the Amalga Barrens as a dam site to simplify my language and keep it consistent with the language use in the texts I analyze. I recognize, however, that the language issue is much more complicated than it appears to be, and my simplification of it in this introduction is not meant to disregard the complexity of rhetoric and language.

**Overriding Research Question**

The overriding question driving this research project is as follows: Against the odds, how did BAS influence a change in public policy regarding the Amalga Barrens
wetlands dam proposal when similar groups dealing with similar issues have failed or met with mixed results? Few community-based environmental advocacy groups have changed public policy. Therefore, the answer to this question can help environmental advocacy groups better prepare communication strategies with their limited resources and expertise, and it can help professional communicators think and act like strategists, which scholars have argued is necessary to elevate the status and increase the value of professional communication in the 21st century (Mirel & Spilka, 2002). My dissertation also provides a better understanding of theory in the field of professional communication generally and environmental communication specifically.

**Purpose of Research**

The ultimate purpose of my research project is to begin to develop a set of strategies that community-based environmental groups can use to effectively communicate advocacy issues with their varied audiences. This larger project involves researching both successful and unsuccessful outcomes of historical issues that groups rally behind. The benefit of such an approach is to discover what worked and why, and what did not work and why. By exploring both types of outcomes and the communication practices involved in the journey to those outcomes, I can begin to understand how rhetorical processes influence outcomes. My ultimate goal is to develop communication strategies that community-based environmental advocacy groups can use no matter their end game. Having such a set of strategies may help these smaller environmental groups use their limited resources more effectively and target their messages more strategically. Many community-based environmental groups do not understand strategic communications. However, as environmental issues gain greater attention and become
more political, it is critical that community groups use strategic communication practices to keep up with the demands of managing their issues. And as small groups, they have the greatest need for help. This larger project is also important because research-based communication strategies for community-based environmental advocacy groups do not currently exist. Therefore, my project as a whole has the potential to build a first-of-its-kind strategic communication framework that will not only help community environmental groups be more effective but also advance the importance of communication as a strategic organizational practice and contribute to a better understanding of rhetorical theory.

My dissertation serves as the inaugural case study in my future comprehensive set of studies. I anticipate doing several years of research to build a strategic communication framework for community-based environmental groups, and the Amalga Barrens environmental issue is the starting point.

Context and Research Problem

I chose environmental rhetoric as my research area because of my professional experience as an environmental communicator. I managed communication practices (mostly media and public relations) for a state environmental regulatory agency for five years. I am familiar with environmental rhetoric from a government point of view. During the past several years, however, my interests have expanded to include other stakeholders involved in communicating environmental issues. One such stakeholder is the public. My professional experience made it clear that all stakeholders had conflicting interests and that communication was the key to negotiating those interests. While all
groups had to compromise in one way or another, I noticed that the big power players (government and corporations) compromised the least and community groups compromised the most. It was clear that the public was at a certain disadvantage because they were neither scientific experts nor political players with deep pockets. While they were happy to be sitting at the table, so to speak, they struggled with the communication process. They were not on a level playing field and could not compete.

Now, as a researcher in professional communication, I think about what I saw and experienced as a practitioner, and I have a desire to help communities better position themselves with their audiences. The public is an important part of the democratic process, and citizens deserve more than just a chance to compete—more than just a place at the negotiating table. In addition to a place at the table, they deserve to be considered legitimate stakeholders, and they deserve to have influence. They deserve a voice and a chance to make a difference in their communities to protect their environment and health and to enhance their quality of life. In the future, citizens may still have to compromise the most, and they may most likely be perceived as non-experts and non-players for years to come. I do not expect my research to change the world, but I do want it to be useful and meaningful. Helping community-based environmental advocacy groups strengthen their communication practices is useful because groups need help and have limited resources, and it is meaningful because the environment needs a concerned citizenry looking after its interests.

Why Study the Amalga Barrens?

The Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy is an interesting case to study for two reasons. First, Amalga Barrens is a success story. The Amalga Barrens is located in
northern Utah, far away from policymakers in Salt Lake City. It is a barren area of Cache Valley, and not much is out there except a unique wetland for migratory shore birds and farming and grazing land for multi-generational farmers. It is the perfect “out of sight, out of mind” location that avoids the “not in my backyard” problems for policymakers doing business a hundred miles away. Despite these challenges, BAS overcame the odds and succeeded where many environmental groups do not. Policymakers changed their minds about the Amalga Barrens proposal because of the influence of a strong community group led by the BAS on a key state legislator, who then recommended to the legislature that it remove the Amalga Barrens site from the Bear River Development Act. There is no scholarship on how it happened, but as scholars, professional communicators, and environmental advocates, we need to learn from the BAS success so we can build on it in future situations. Environmental issues like the Amalga Barrens still occur, and, in fact, they are growing in number as environmental concerns increase both in Utah and across the nation. To be sure, the Amalga Barrens is a rich case study of abundant strategies and practices that must be explored and revealed for the benefit of the public, the environment, the field of professional communication, and the field of environmental public policy.

Second, BAS managed the Amalga Barrens controversy in an anti-environment, pro-economic development political climate—and, against what appeared to be insurmountable odds, it still succeeded. In the 1990s, Utah experienced unprecedented population growth. At the same time, it experienced severe drought conditions and strains on water resources in the arid conditions typical of Utah. Water was a limited resource in high demand. Utah needed more water to quench the thirst of a growing population along
the Wasatch Front, which was where most Utahns lived and worked. Policymakers saw
the Bear River as a potential water development source for the Wasatch Front residents.
The Bear River winds its way through rural eastern and northern Utah before connecting
to the Great Salt Lake at the northern tip of the Wasatch Front. In the eyes of
policymakers, the Bear River was the perfect place for a dam where water could be
developed in a rural area where few people lived and could then be piped to the Wasatch
Front where the water was needed most. For those living outside the affected area, it was
a perfect solution to the water resource problem facing Utah. For those living inside the
affected area, the Amalga Barrens dam proposal had significant negative environmental,
economic, and social impacts. Even worse, Cache Valley residents would not receive any
water from the dam. They would bear the negative impacts but receive no benefits. This
scenario, unfortunately, is typical of Utah politics. Economic development along the
Wasatch Front takes precedence over economic development outside the Wasatch Front,
and water development takes priority over environmental protection. BAS had a lot
pushing against its success—it was a “David” facing a “Goliath.” It was a small,
community-based group with few resources; it was located in a rural part of the state that
had little representation in the Utah State Legislature and little influence over public
policy decisions; and it was working in a political climate where the environment was not
a priority and where water was desperately needed and, therefore, the priority. Despite all
these challenges, the BAS beat the odds and succeeded anyway.

Utah politics has not changed much since the Amalga Barrens. Utah, as a whole,
still favors economic development over environmental quality. Voices for the
environment, however, are getting louder, but those voices still have a long way to go to
make a difference like BAS did. This success story is what makes the Amalga Barrens so interesting and so necessary to study. BAS did what many environmental groups in Utah have not been able to do before or since the Amalga Barrens. Communication scholars and practitioners need to know why and how to prepare better strategies and to prepare better strategists.

**Focus on Strategic Communication**

The focus on communication strategy is particularly important for professional communication in the 21st century. Professional communication scholars B. Mirel and R. Spilka (2002) have called for a reinvigoration of the field (p. 2). They argued that the 21st century demands that professional communicators move the field in a new direction toward leadership roles and strategic planning. In other words, in order to add value to the 21st century workplace and elevate the status of the field, professional communicators must be more than mere tacticians. They must be strategists, and strategists are organizational leaders. As strategists, professional communicators broaden their responsibilities, increase their circle of influence, become major players with other organizational strategists in managing organizational goals, and strengthen the field as a whole.

My dissertation answers this call for reinvigoration and helps move the field in the direction it must go in order to remain valuable. My research focuses squarely on rhetorical moves (e.g., choosing certain words, narratives, and metaphors; developing persuasive arguments; positioning those arguments in genres and with varied audiences; establishing position as a legitimate stakeholder) as communication strategies. Strategic communication involves the ability of the strategist to take a broad and in-depth look at
the organization and assess where effective communication is most needed and develop a plan that makes it happen (Durutta, 2006, p. 20). For example, BAS’s strategy was to persuade policymakers to remove the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a possible dam site. Tactics, on the other hand, are the step-by-step details that must happen to accomplish a strategy (Potter, 2006, p. 83). In BAS’s case, the tactics included lobbying efforts, public meetings to educate the community, direct communication with opponents, and keeping the issue front and center through the media. Too many professional communicators currently function at the tactician level. They produce a newsletter, but they do not know how the newsletter helps meet higher organizational goals. A tactician is not a leader and does not sit at the strategy table. An executive thinks a newsletter is a good idea, but there is no strategic insight into that newsletter’s purpose. Just because a professional communicator can produce a newsletter does not mean he or she should. There has to be a reason behind every tactic, and there has to be a way to evaluate its effectiveness. Professional communicators are in a position to provide this strategic oversight, but they often do not because they still view themselves as tacticians. They will not be invited to the leadership table until they start to think and act like strategists. Through their knowledge and skills, professional communicators are uniquely qualified to be strategists, but they are currently working below their potential. My research is an attempt to help professional communicators think and act like strategists, and it is an attempt to help elevate the field and add organizational value wherever professional communicators work.
Background and Scope

The Barrens is located five miles west of Smithfield, just west of the town of Amalga, and just east of the town of Newton in northern Utah. It received the name due to the relatively barren ground in the area, but 1,400 acres of wetlands encompass the Barrens. The wetlands serve the nesting, resting, and feeding needs of a 100 species of birds, including one potentially threatened species. The farmlands are productive areas and maintain the livelihoods of many Amalga town residents. A private duck hunting club also operates on the Barrens.

The 1990 Utah State Legislature appropriated $1.25 million to study water development in the Bear River Water Basin. The 1991 Utah State Legislature passed the Bear River Development Act, authorizing the Utah Division of Water Resources to develop the surface waters of the Bear River and its tributaries to serve the water needs of a growing population along the Wasatch Front. Potential reservoir projects included the Barrens. This work by the State of Utah is known as the Bear River Development Project. (See Figures 1 and 2.)
Figure 1. The Bear River in the northern part of Amalga, Utah.

Figure 2. The Bear River on the eastern edge of Amalga, Utah.
The Utah Division of Water Resources proposed building an off-stream water storage reservoir on the Barrens. The reservoir would cover 3,500 to 4,500 acres (6-7 square miles) of wetlands and farmlands. (See Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6.) Although large, it would be a shallow reservoir, ranging in depth from 8 feet to 22 feet. The water would come from the nearby Bear River, diverted to the proposed reservoir site through a series of pipes and canals. The water would then be channeled through another pipeline to Box Elder County where it would be allocated to the water conservancy districts (who supply water they receive from water resources such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and underground aquifers to residents and businesses) that serve Box Elder County, Weber County, Davis County, and Salt Lake County.

*Figure 3. Looking west over farmland in Amalga, Utah.*
Figure 4. Looking east toward the Barrens in Amalga, Utah.

Figure 5. The Barrens wetlands in Amalga, Utah, during the wet season.
BAS had an interest in saving the wetlands and was against the construction of the reservoir. It wanted to see the area left and managed as is so that the migratory bird population would have a place to rest and feed. BAS made two efforts to remove the Barrens from the list of sites being considered for water development. The first effort was in 1991, and it failed. The second effort began in 1997 and continued through at least 1999. It succeeded. In 2002, the Barrens was removed from the list.

The scope of my dissertation, then, focuses on the first and second efforts to remove the Amalga Barrens from the list of sites under consideration for water development. BAS took different approaches each time it tried to influence change. For example, during the first effort, BAS worked with a lobbyist who served as the

Figure 6. Rendering of the proposed Barrens reservoir, covering 6-7 square miles in Amalga, Utah.
communication conduit to the Utah State Legislature. That approach failed. During the second effort, BAS implemented a completely different strategy of working with a key legislator who recommended to the Utah State Legislature that the Amalga Barrens be removed from consideration as a dam site. This strategy worked. In this dissertation, I analyzed these two approaches and looked at them through a rhetorical lens. This approach revealed the rhetorical moves that both failed and succeeded. I then took this information and formulated a set of communication strategies that may help other groups be more effective at influencing a change in public policy. I understand that I cannot generalize the Amalga Barrens strategies as effective for all other environmental issues. What I can do is use the Amalga Barrens strategies as a heuristic to discover rhetorical moves in other environmental case studies that I will research in the future as a way to develop my strategic communication framework.

Primary Research

I conducted primary research to triangulate my research findings. My primary sources came from two archives and a set of eight interviews. The first archive is a collection of BAS documents containing a decade’s worth of information on the Amalga Barrens. The second is an archive of news articles from the *Deseret News*, *Salt Lake Tribune*, and (Logan) *Herald Journal* spanning about 14 years. The interviews were with BAS leaders, local and state government officials, and local media sources. I discuss each source in detail below.

Many of the documents I use for my rhetorical analysis came from an Amalga Barrens archive I received from the BAS. B. Dixon, president of BAS during the Amalga Barrens controversy, kept an archive of documents BAS prepared or collected from
others. The extensive archive contains documents from the first effort in 1990-91 and the second effort in 1997-99 and provides a clear snapshot of how, what, when, why, and to whom BAS communicated. Because I am working with documents from different time periods, I divided the documents according to the first and second efforts. The “first effort” collection contains 18 documents totaling 51 pages. Genres include fact sheets, letters, position statements, presentation scripts, and summaries. The “second effort” collection contains 19 documents totaling 41 pages. Genres include letters, newsletter article, press release, public meeting agendas, lists of questions for public meeting panelists, and presentation scripts. For a complete list of documents, please see Appendix A and Appendix B.

To help me track public opinion, attitudes, and arguments, I analyzed an archive of 52 news articles that began in 1988 when the Bear River water development political debate began and that ended in 2002 when the Amalga Barrens proposed site was removed by law from consideration. The archive includes media coverage in the Salt Lake area, where the Bear River water was proposed to go and where government officials and policymakers conducted their business, and the Cache Valley area, where the Amalga Barrens dam was proposed to be built and where local residents established their voice and influence. Together with the BAS archive, the news archive helped me establish a timeline of significant events that influenced BAS’s communication strategy. It also allowed me to compare BAS’s arguments with those presented in the media to determine what kind of information the public received and how they reacted to that information. To be sure, news articles are important historical documents to analyze because they shine a light on events, key players, and a variety of attitudes and opinions
that tell a compelling story from an “objective” point of view. For a complete list of news articles, please see Appendix C.

To add to the richness of the two archives, I included in my analysis information I received from former BAS President B. Dixon during an interview in 2008 and again in 2012. B. Dixon lived the Amalga Barrens experience and developed the second-effort communication strategies I analyze here. He, therefore, provides a personal perspective that explains why the communication strategies were developed and how BAS planned to execute these strategies. Furthermore, I interviewed W. Martinson who served as the Audubon lobbyist and communication strategist during the first effort. Other interviews included former environmental reporter J. Wise and former editor T. Vitale from the Herald Journal, Utah Division of Water Resources Director D. Strong, Senator L. Hillyard, former Cache County Councilman and Chairman of the Cache County Water Policy Board L. Anhder, and Amalga Town Mayor D. Wood.

**Overview of Fundamental Communication Strategies**

There are five fundamental communication strategies that stand out as appearing to have made a difference in helping BAS influence a change in public policy. They are as follows: (1) be civil in word and deed, (2) target specific individuals with influence, (3) focus on cost with decision-makers, (4) create a portfolio of arguments grounded in data, and (5) educate the community. Each one is briefly discussed below. A more detailed discussion can be found in the Chapter VI.
Be Civil in Word and Deed

The Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy teaches that civility goes a long way in building credibility, and credibility builds trust. Trustworthy people are heard. When trustworthy individuals collaborate to learn and inform, then good environmental decisions are made through cooperation. BAS established civility as a guiding principle early on, and civility became the “way of doing business” when people talked about the issue among themselves, at meetings, in public hearings, and in the media. As a result, BAS established an effective ethos with its audiences, which in part helped BAS influence public policy.

Target Specific Individuals with Influence

The first attempt to delist the Barrens in 1991 failed in part because the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah tasked a lobbyist to target the legislature as a whole body, thus casting too wide a net. The first attempt, therefore, was a rhetorical mismatch. The lobbyist did not react to the rhetorical situation with the appropriate rhetoric. By contrast, the second effort in the late 1990s under BAS’s leadership showed that bringing the conversation down to the local level and targeting specific individuals with influence in the legislature were crucial rhetorical acts. Communication flowed from BAS and the community to specific influential individuals who participated in the collaborative learning process to understand the community’s concerns. They then took these community concerns back to their colleagues in the legislature, who ultimately agreed that the Amalga Barrens site should be removed from consideration. Thus, when the rhetorical situation changed in the 1990s, BAS reacted by using advocates—insiders—to communicate indirectly with legislators. It was better to target (cast a narrow net) specific
individuals who had influence with decision-makers because these individuals were closer to the target audience.

**Focus on Cost with Decision-Makers**

In BAS’s eyes, the Amalga Barrens proposal was always an environmental issue. Its mission as a conservation organization was to protect the bird habitat on the wetland. However, BAS recognized that in Utah’s pro-economic development political climate, it needed to craft an economic message. The environmental message alone may have certainly been ignored by decision-makers (legislators) who had a fiduciary responsibility to spend taxpayer money wisely. Thus, BAS found a way to connect their values to the decision-makers’ values by arguing the high environmental costs of mitigating the wetland. Many key players in the controversy disclosed that the economic argument that included both the cost of construction and the cost of mitigation won over the legislature. Therefore, the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy shows that economics may trump the environment, unless the environment can be cast in economic terms. The more concrete the argument, the more palatable it is for decision-makers, who may be unmoved by abstract environmental ideologies.

**Create a Portfolio of Arguments Grounded in Data**

BAS diversified its portfolio of arguments to match the values, beliefs, and attitudes of its various audiences and to match the rhetorical situations in which its various audiences were operating. BAS’s arguments focused on four critical points: the cost of constructing the reservoir and mitigating the wetland loss, the loss of or damage to the special and irreplaceable bird habitat, the loss of productive farmland to Amalga
residents and the loss of quality of life to Cache Valley residents, and the need for conservation. Three of the four arguments were grounded in scientific and economic data coming from technical experts. The facts were concrete, tangible, and palatable for a range of audiences. In contrast, the argument about loss of quality of life was abstract and difficult to quantify. Because “quality of life” meant different things to different people, the argument was slippery, never hitting the target right on. BAS recognized the abstract nature of this argument and grounded it for the local audience by using metaphors. BAS combined logos with pathos and ethos, resulting in hitting its mark with an emotionally powerful and memorable metaphor. The abstract had become concrete. Concrete arguments may be more palatable for audiences. Thus, abstract arguments may benefit from being reframed in terms people can understand.

Another important point about creating a portfolio of arguments is that appropriate arguments can be selected from the portfolio to match the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the audience being targeted. BAS was highly strategic with its arguments and audiences, targeting the legislature and public officials with economic and conservation arguments, the community with loss of farmland and quality of life arguments, and environmentalists with loss of bird habitat arguments. While the economic argument won at the end of the day, the other arguments in the portfolio had a place in the conversation. The arguments in the portfolio worked harmoniously to achieve the desire outcome—the change in public policy to remove the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a Bear River dam site. Thus, it is important for environmental groups to understand the value of diversifying the number of arguments and the order is which they are presented to audiences while still remaining consistent and coherent.
Educate the Community

BAS recognized early on that education was critical to their success. During the first effort in the early 1990s, BAS joined forces with other Utah Audubon chapters to create the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, and left it up to the council’s lobbyist to do the educating for it. While lobbying helped disperse information and make BAS’s opposition known, it did not succeed at convincing that legislature that the Barrens was an unacceptable site for Bear River development. That outcome materialized in the late 1990s once BAS led its own education efforts at the local level. BAS held town meetings where all points of view were welcomed and heard. BAS also made sure that knowledgeable (scientific experts) and influential people (legislators and government officials) served on the panels so that residents could get credible information. Furthermore, the learning process during the town meetings was a two-way endeavor. The influential people in attendance also learned about the community’s concerns and were instrumental in delivering that message to decision-makers. Thus, civil, social interactions created environments where collaborative learning could take place. BAS also engaged community members and influential people in conversations in the media and at public hearings where the Amalga Barrens was being discussed and debated. All these opportunities to educate people made the Barrens present in so many public spheres. This vast awareness helped facilitate the decision-making and policy-changing processes the legislature went through to delist the Barrens.
Outline of Chapters

Chapter II, “Literature Review and Methodology,” sets the stage for both environmental rhetoric and professional communication by reviewing the literature that explores rhetorical theory generally and environmental rhetoric specifically, collaborative learning and the closely related social constructionist theory, Trinity of Voice and public participation processes in environmental decision-making, and organizational strategic communication that includes a discussion of genre theory. I also discuss in more detail my research methodology and research questions. Finally, I explain how my research contributes to and extends the current conversation in professional communication and environmental rhetoric.

Chapter III, “Establishing Effective Ethos for Evolving Rhetorical Situations,” provides an overview of the decade-long evolving rhetorical situations BAS operated in and explains how ethos (credibility and authority) tipped success in BAS’s favor. This analysis sets the context of the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy and provides a necessary foundation on which the other analyses build. The purpose of this analysis is to compare and contrast the first and second efforts using Aristotle’s definition of ethos, L. Bitzer’s definition of a rhetorical situation, and S. Daniels and G. Walker’s definition of collaborative learning.

Chapter IV, “Preparing an Argument by Building a Voice, Gaining an Audience, and Establishing Position,” is a compare-and-contrast analysis of the first and second efforts to understand how BAS built a voice, gained an audience, and positioned itself as an influential stakeholder. The main theoretical lens is S. Senecah’s Trinity of Voice, but
S. Daniels and G. Walker’s collaborative learning approach and Aristotle’s persuasive appeals also make significant contributions.

Chapter V, “Crafting an Argument by Combining Logos and Pathos,” provides a final analysis, focusing on argument construction and delivery. Once again, I compare and contrast the first and second efforts to examine how arguments changed or remained the same over time and to understand how BAS combined scientific information with community sentiments to create effective arguments. The main theoretical lens for this analysis is Aristotle’s definition of logos and pathos.

In Chapters III-V, the value of strategic communication is demonstrated. To help with this demonstration and to complete my analyses using rhetorical, collaborative learning, and Trinity of Voice theories, I examine information taken from interviews with key sources; news articles; letters; position statements; fact sheets; summaries; a press release; and public meeting agendas, questions, and presentation notes. The information presented in these documents and gleaned from interviews contains layers of rhetoric that need to be analyzed in order to be understood.

Chapter VI, “Conclusions and Implications for Professional Communicators,” discusses the conclusions of my three analyses, a proposed set of communication strategies, lessons the key players learned from this controversy, the status of the Barrens wetlands today, an update on water development in northern Utah, and descriptions of how the conclusions and strategies contribute to professional communication and environmental rhetoric scholarship and pedagogy.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I review the literature informing my dissertation and discuss the research methodology I use to conduct my three-pronged analysis of Bridgerland Audubon Society’s (BAS) communication strategies for changing public policy that resulted in protecting the Amalga Barrens wetlands from water development during the 1990s.

My dissertation builds on research from five main areas: rhetoric; genre; social; strategic communication; and environmental communication, public participation, and collaborative learning. Within each area are key theoretical perspectives that I use to guide my three analyses. These theories include general rhetoric, environmental rhetoric, collaborative learning, Trinity of Voice, public participation, genre, and social constructionism. For my dissertation, I narrow my focus to three of the above theories, recognizing that the others are closely associated and can, therefore, be combined in my analyses where appropriate. As such, this literature review explores rhetorical theory generally, environmental rhetoric specifically, and the closely related genre theory; collaborative learning and the closely related social constructionist theory; and Trinity of Voice and public participation processes in environmental decision-making. Strategic organizational communication is a practice that infiltrates all aspects of my dissertation and is, therefore, considered an umbrella perspective. While discussing these theories and practice, I also explain their relevance to my dissertation.
Rhetorical Theory

Rhetorical theory has a rich history encompassing hundreds of years of scholarship. P. Bizzell and B. Herzberg (2001) argued that the history of rhetoric is “the story of a long struggle to understand the relationship between discourse and knowledge, communication and its effects, language and experience” (p. 16). For my dissertation, I focus on the work of Aristotle from the classical period and L. Bitzer from the modern/postmodern period. Even though I use only two rhetoricians, their work is built on others before them, and their work has influenced others after them. Therefore, a solid understanding of contributors to the field as a whole is worth noting. Certainly, the theorists in these two eras make significant contributions to our current understanding and use of rhetoric as a form of persuasion in all communicative acts, and they provide a well-defined and meaningful view of rhetorical theory that richly informs my research.

Classical Rhetoric

In 5th century B.C., Aristotle (2007) defined rhetoric as “an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (p. 37). His definition is still used today, as are his forms of persuasion called ethos (character, credibility, and authority), pathos (beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions), and logos (logic, facts, and sound reasoning). Aristotle argued that a speaker’s persuasive power comes from his/her ability to appeal to an audience’s pathos and logos. He also argued that how the audience views the speaker’s ethos is a form of persuasion. Aristotle developed his theory of rhetoric based on the work of the Sophists, Isocrates, and Plato, who believed that discourse uncovered absolute truth through a dialectic, or a rigorous form of
argumentative dialogue between experts (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, pp. 22-31). The argument, or enthymeme, is the core of Aristotle’s rhetoric. He also introduced the five parts of preparing a persuasive speech, which Cicero formalized into what is known today as the five canons. The canons are a cornerstone of the study of rhetoric and include the following parts: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 34). In classical times, most public communication was spoken, so classical rhetoricians framed their view of rhetoric in the speech act. Today, however, communication is written as well as spoken, so the canons are viewed as a process for persuasive writing as well. During classical times, memory referred to the use of mnemonics to help the speaker deliver the speech by memory, and delivery referred to the use of gestures and voice modulation to present a speech. Today, memory refers to a communicator’s level of knowledge about a topic, and delivery is how the communicator delivers his/her message—the genre, in other words. A Roman contemporary of Cicero was Quintilian, who taught his students in the style of Cicero and argued that rhetoric should be used for moral ends (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 38). Isocrates also believed that rhetoric is necessary to becoming a valuable citizen (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 26).

**Modern Rhetoric**

The idea of rhetoric as a moral compass toward citizenship is noted again in the work of K. Burke. “Toward a better life” is a theme running through K. Burke’s writing (Conley, 1990, p. 269). He viewed rhetoric as a way to build social cohesion and induce cooperation; he wanted language to overcome faction instead of contribute to it (Conley, 1990, p. 273, 281). He developed the concept of identification and argued that it was a
necessary condition for persuasion. Identification, however, is form of persuasion itself. The theory posits that a communicator identifies with an audience’s values first before presenting any arguments. Thus, the communicator must persuade his/her audience that they share the same values. Once that process has taken place, then the next layer of persuasion can unfold and change can occur. Theorist B. Faber (2002) found K. Burke’s theory of identification useful to his “discursive model of change.” B. Faber developed his model to help organizations manage social changes inside their organizations and outside in their local environments (p. 179). He argued that identity and communication are the key features in the process of change, and an organization without an identity is also an organization without a discourse (pp. 26, 171-172).

Like K. Burke, R. Weaver believed that language is persuasive because it reflects a set of ethical values and aims to move others to accept those values (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 1194). The goal of rhetoric, then, is to reveal the ethical underpinnings of a discourse. R. Weaver’s view was similar to Plato, who believed that rhetoric could be used to “clear away the conventional underbrush” so that the truth could be seen (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 29). C. Perelman, another modern rhetorician, expanded this concept of shared beliefs by arguing that knowledge and beliefs are formed by arguments based on probable reasoning, experience, and custom (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 14). J. Derrida, on the other hand, believed that knowledge is not a function of logic and that language is not a medium for knowledge; rather, knowledge is made by language (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 1197). M. Foucault also believed that knowledge is socially constructed through discourse and that discourse is shaped by a community’s complex network of interactions and motivations (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001, p. 15).
While K. Burke was seeking a rhetoric of motives to understand community consensus, J. Habermas was seeking rationally motivated consensus derived from the argument itself (Conley, 1990, p. 300). According to J. Habermas, consensus grounded in rationality was the ideal speech situation. He coined the term “communicative rationality” to mean that all members of a discourse community had a fair and equal chance to have a place in a debate and to express an opinion to ensure that consensus is rationally grounded (Conley, 1990, p. 302).

**Rhetoric and Science**

According to A. Gross (1994), rhetoric revealed two models for the public understanding of science. The model most useful to my dissertation is the contextual model, which depicts two-way communication between science and its publics; builds trust; implies active participation to reach “public understanding” by equally joining scientific and local knowledge; and focuses on the rhetorical situation, not the state of science (p. 6). This model embodies socially constructed knowledge, public participation, and rhetoric as situational. A. Gross argued that “rhetoric must start its task of persuasion where most people are at” (p. 5), and where they are at is what L. Bitzer referred to as the rhetorical situation. L. Bitzer (1992) argued that the rhetorical situation calls the rhetorical discourse into existence (p. 2). There are times, he said, when situations create an exigency to which rhetorical discourse can respond. Examples abound in the literature of communication acts being performed in response to a critical situation, especially about the environment and human health (Carson, 2002; Farrell & Goodnight, 1998; Gibbs, 1998; Ingham, 1996; Waddell, 1996). Situations that require the public’s understanding of science are particularly tricky because scientists tend to privilege logic
over emotion in policy formation. C. Waddell (1990) argued that the appropriateness of an argument is what matters, and the audience and situation determine what is appropriate because “appropriate” is a social construct. Therefore, science is rhetorical—it contains some blend of logic, emotion, and credibility—and scientific communication is a social act (Bazerman, 1983, p. 156). Communication takes place between individuals and within groups, and it requires audience awareness, which requires knowledge of the social context (rhetorical situation). The connections among science, rhetoric, and social action are reasons why my rhetorical analysis must consider both text and context. Flowing forth from the Amalga Barrens situation were arguments strategically developed by BAS that contained appeals to authority, scientific data, and environmental values. As C. Miller (2004) argued, “truth” or “certainty” was not found in isolated scientific observations or logical procedures but in the communal sharing of ideas and mutual agreement of knowledge (p. 52).

The concepts of persuasive appeals, identification, and change are paramount to my dissertation. In order for BAS to influence change, it had to build an identity around community values and use an appropriate blend of persuasive appeals for its varied audiences in response to a complicated and contentious situation. My analyses reveal how all these rhetorical threads come together to tip the scales in BAS’s favor.

**Genre Theory**

Genre theory is a small part of my dissertation, but it does have close ties to one of Cicero’s rhetorical canons: delivery. In classical times, delivery stressed appropriate gestures and pleasing voice modulation in speech. Today, delivery encompasses all forms
of communication—speech, writing, images, and appearance, to name a few—and is primarily described as genre. In professional and organizational communication, genre is a significant research area, comprising foundational scholarship that informs much of how genre is taught and practiced. The foundation began to build with C. Miller’s (1984) seminal piece that redefined genre as social action. She argued that genre must be centered on how the genre, as a type of discourse, is used—on what rhetorical action it accomplishes—not on form or substance (p. 151). She called genre a “cultural artifact” because genres are the keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community—“they help constitute the substance of our cultural life” (pp. 160, 165). In order to understand genre as a discourse, we need to understand the situation in which the genre rhetorically acted and the social context in which the situation arose.

Communication, therefore, does not exist in a vacuum. It is surrounded by meaning and context that influence how a communicator delivers a message. Genre is a deliberate choice, and it plays a key role in constructing and sharing knowledge in a community.

This concept of genre as social action is supported by the work of C. Berkenkotter and T. Huckin (2004) who defined genres as “dynamic rhetorical structures” (p. 285) and as “the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed” (p. 304). Their theoretical framework described genres as dynamic rhetorical forms that react to recurring situations and that change over time to meet community needs, and as signals of a discourse community’s norms, ideas, language, and social structure (pp. 285-286, 304). Study of an organization’s genres, therefore, helps us understand how communicators act as agents—what motivates them, and what themes and topics are important to them. As we investigate their communication practices, we come to
understand how organizations sustain themselves through their genres (Zachry, 2000, p. 99). Therefore, if we want to understand an organization, then we must study their communication practices.

Because genres are situated in a discourse community, they can be difficult for cross-disciplinary scholars and practitioners to produce and interpret. D. Kain (2005) developed a framework to help people create and interpret texts in unfamiliar situations. The framework focuses on genre function as managed through content, form, and design. A genre’s instrumental function provides information to a broader audience; its metacommunicative function enables readers from a variety of communities to access information; and a genre’s sociopolitical function expresses particular social and political perspectives (Kain, 2005, p. 376). Thus, when participants from different discourse communities need to understand the role of genre knowledge in a project, they can examine the genre from a functional point of view. D. Kain’s functional framework supports the arguments presented by C. Miller, C. Berkenkotter, and T. Huckin that genres are best understood from a social action perspective. Genres perform functions within a social context. They are trying to accomplish an objective. Careful examination of genres reveals those objectives as well as motives, beliefs, values, themes, arguments, and social situations.

During the second effort to remove the Amalga Barrens from the list of dam sites under consideration for water development, BAS used genres strategically to inform audiences and stimulate community action. The BAS archive clearly shows that when genre use increased, so did community involvement. Thus, genre theory helps me
understand how BAS communicated with its varied audiences and what BAS hoped to accomplish with the genres they chose to use.

Social Theory

In addition to redefining genre as social action and examining genre from a functional point of view, professional communication scholars have argued for a shift toward the social perspective. C. Thralls and N. R. Blyler (2004) presented four perspectives that describe how communities determine what knowledge is. In my dissertation, I use the social constructionist perspective because of its close ties to rhetoric, collaborative learning, and strategic communication. Social constructionists believe that communities shape and determine the discourse of their members through communal norms; they agree on what they will call knowledge (p. 111). The focus of social constructionist theory is on community conversations and collaborative learning. The Amalga Barrens community applied social constructionist theory as a way to build and share knowledge; invite and socialize new members into the community; facilitate respectful and productive conversations; encourage learning of information from multiple sources; and understand multiple perspectives, including conflicting perspectives. This social lens helped me understand the social and rhetorical contexts that built community knowledge. This knowledge directly influenced community actions that created a successful outcome for Cache Valley residents during the controversy.

Understanding the Amalga Barrens community context was important because a community is comprised of individuals who learn from each other through communication. K. Bruffee (1984) posited that knowledge is a social artifact; that
knowledge is accepted through discourse; and that learning is a social, not individual, process. He said, “We can think because we can talk … to think well as individuals we must learn to think well collaboratively, that is, we must learn to converse well” (p. 640). Learning to think better, therefore, means learning to converse better, and writing serves as a community’s ability to carry on a conversation. K. Bruffee called this type of learning collaborative and argued that collaborative learning is one way people can negotiate their way into a conversation. K. Bruffee’s point of view is an orientation toward social constructionist theory. As I stated above, collaborative learning certainly played a critical role in the Amalga Barrens controversy, which I discuss later in this literature review. For now, though, I want to emphasize that the social perspective is a major force in communication and cannot be separated from rhetoric. In other words, social knowledge functions rhetorically. T. Farrell (1976) defined rhetoric as the “primary process by which social conduct is coordinated” (p. 5). Therefore, social knowledge provides the foundation and direction for rhetoric because “social knowledge is actualized through the decision and action of an audience” (p. 5). Those decisions and actions transform a society into a community, which is the overarching function of social knowledge, according to Farrell (p. 11). Communication, delivered through genre, is what allows an audience to make informed decisions and act accordingly. A community, therefore, is shaped by its social and rhetorical practices as well as its genre conventions.

**Strategic Communication**

Strategic communication is a common practice in public relations and marketing. It is a term used frequently in organizations that view communication as a critical part of
their mission. Public relations practitioners (those who write news releases and plan news conferences, develop and deliver key messages, and manage conflicts with stakeholders through communication) have been trying for years to elevate their field and have, for the most part, been successful because they have developed a strategic mindset—they think and act like strategists and hold leadership positions because of that. On the other hand, many professional communicators (those who write instruction manuals, reports, and proposals; conduct usability tests; and design websites) do not have this mindset, but they must in order for the field to fare well in the 21st century. According to professional communication scholars B. Mirel and R. Spilka (2002), the field must become “associated with strategic planning” (p. 4) and must strengthen relationships with “cross-functional colleagues in ways that help elevate our status and value” (p. 2). Public relations and marketing are cross-functional fields. Many professional communication students find jobs in public relations, and many professional communicators work with marketing teams. These cross-functional fields share much in common—writing, editing, publication management, and rhetoric—except the strategic mindset. When professional communicators enter the workplace, they are ill-equipped to do so, because professional communication pedagogy does not emphasis strategic communication. For these reasons, I borrow the term “strategic communication” from public relations and marketing and argue for more emphasis on strategic communication as a best practice in professional communication.

The move toward strategic communication is a natural fit for professional communication. Most professional communicators operate at the tactical level. What is missing is the broader strategic input at the senior level of an organization. Strategic
communication involves the ability of the strategist to take a broad and in-depth look at the organization and assess where effective communication is most needed and develop a plan that makes it happen (Durutta, 2006, p. 20). Tactics are the step-by-step details that must happen to accomplish a strategy (Potter, 2006, p. 83). An organizational communicator can be both a strategist and a tactician, but the strategic mindset provides the greatest value to an organization. Organizations that value the communication function elevate their strategists to leadership positions. Strategists are part of the strategic management team because they develop communication programs for strategic publics as part of the organization’s overall strategic management process (Grunig & Grunig, 2006, p. 8). Strategic communicators set high-level communication priorities based on organizational goals and develop a plan that includes a situation analysis, message statement, target audience and stakeholders, tactical implementation, and evaluation (Potter, 2006, pp. 82-87). They function at multiple levels such as program, functional, organizational, and societal (Grunig & Grunig, 2006, p. 5); they develop relationships of trust with leadership, target audiences, and stakeholders (Shockley-Zalabak & Ellis, 2006, p. 44); they use formative and evaluative research to manage their communication programs strategically (Grunig & Grunig, 2006, p. 13); and their portfolio of skills includes writing, editing, designing, speaking, listening, and planning (Durutta, 2006, p. 21-22). To be sure, the field of professional communication shares a set of tactical skills with other fields, but professional communication needs to elevate its skill set to include strategic communication in order to add value to the field and to benefit the organizations and stakeholders who practice it. My dissertation shines a
spotlight on how BAS successfully implemented communication strategies so others may learn from it and apply it to their own situations.

**Environmental Communication, Public Participation, and Collaborative Learning**

While strategic communication can work in any professional communication subfield, it is particularly beneficial in environmental communication. Scholars frequently frame environmental discourse around public involvement and consensus building, which requires an ability to identify strategic publics; analyze their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors; and develop environmental communication strategies that engage them in the decision-making and policy-formation process (Cantrill, 1993; Coppola, 2000). It is evident, then, that environmental communication is strategic, rhetorical, and social. This triad is apparent in C. Waddell’s (2000) social constructionist model of public participation, which acknowledges the values, beliefs, and emotions (a connection to Aristotle’s pathos) of technical experts and non-experts alike in forming policy decisions. Information flows in both directions, so communication is interactive and the distinction between expert and non-expert is blurred. Through this process, public policy decisions are socially constructed (p. 9). An issue involving the Great Lakes provides an example of how public participation followed the social constructionist model. During public participation activities, emotional appeals were common in the testimony of “rational” experts and “emotional” members of the public, and both were effective at persuading and influencing public policy (Waddell, 1996, p. 15).

The “expert” v. “non-expert” binary is a common point of contention in environmental communication and the subject of much research in the field (Cheng &
Daniels, 2005; Farrell & Goodnight, 1998; Killingsworth & Palmer, 1992; Spangle & Knapp, 1996; Wondolleck, Gray, & Bryan, 2003). M. J. Killingsworth and J. Palmer (1992) were among the first scholars to show how “us” v. “them,” or “same” v. “other,” language inhibits groups from acting in mutually beneficial ways. They coined the term “ecospeak” to mean a form of language and a way of framing arguments that stops thinking and inhibits social cooperation rather than extending thinking and promoting cooperation through communication (p. 9). For example, they analyzed environmental impact statements and found that experts’ writing asserted their privileged status, made information less accessible and readable to non-experts, and distanced themselves from their subject matter and audiences (pp. 168, 170). Ecospeak, then, has come to symbolize the practice of neutralizing the public and removing it from the decision-making process (p. 165). The result has been years of polarized language and closed discourse communities.

Interactions, however, are getting better as various stakeholders realize that cooperation is more beneficial than conflict. Several public participatory and collaborative learning theories and practices have surfaced in the past couple of years to argue the virtues of consensus and cooperation in environmental decision making. For example, S. Senecah (2004) argued that environmental decisions do not need to be contentious or destructive, and effective public participation can build a community’s capacity to engage in productive, higher-quality discourse (a connection to K. Burke’s identification) (p. 14). Her Trinity of Voice theory posits that “the key to effective process is an ongoing relationship of trust building to enhance community cohesiveness and capacity, and results in good environmental decisions” (p. 23). The Trinity consists
of access (opportunity to be heard), standing (legitimacy and respect for all stakeholders’ perspectives), and influence (ideas considered and stakeholders part of the process) (pp. 23-25). The Trinity of Voice, then, has a rhetorical orientation and opens discourse communities to collaborative learning. S. Daniels and G. Walker (2001) argued that social learning is fundamental to good public policy decisions, and the learning process must be able to accommodate value differences (p. xiii). They posited that their collaborative learning framework integrates systems thinking (a strategic mindset, in other words) and conflict management (p. xiv), and that the goal of collaborative learning is to improve the quality of public decisions by improving social deliberation (p. 11). Collaborative learning, therefore, has rhetorical and social orientations, which are necessary for effective environmental advocacy.

T. Burns and T. LeMoyne (2001) argued that environmental movements have met with mixed success because the political discourse is not strategic, rhetorical, and collaborative. To be more effective, they suggested that environmental groups prioritize environmental issues (strategy), build a community on common values and act in a unified manner (rhetoric), engage all stakeholders (the left and the right) in the conversation (collaboration), and use language and support measures that promote sustainability (pp. 34-35). Thus, my dissertation analyzes BAS’s communication from strategic, rhetorical, social (collaborative learning), and public participatory (Trinity of Voice) points of view. All orientations are necessary because they work together to create a whole picture; each one is a thread that weaves its way through the Amalga Barrens controversy and creates a web of meaning that can only be understood by examining the whole web instead of the individual threads alone.
This literature reviews lays the foundation for the discussion of my research questions, implications, and methodology that follows.

**Research Questions**

I used rhetorical theory to construct the main theoretical framework for my research. Other theories, however, informed my research. They include collaborative learning, Trinity of Voice, and strategic communication. My research questions consist of two overarching questions and three sets of sub-questions that allow me to conduct a three-pronged rhetorical analysis of the Amalga Barrens controversy. This three-pronged approach opens the door for me to analyze this case study from three rhetorical angles that helps me answer the following overarching question:

- Against the odds, how did BAS influence a change in public policy regarding the Amalga Barrens wetlands dam proposal when similar groups dealing with similar issues have failed or met with mixed results?

The answers to this question can help community-based environmental advocacy groups better prepare communication strategies with their limited resources and expertise, and it can help professional communicators think and act like strategists, which is necessary in order to elevate the status and increase the value of professional communication in the 21st century.

The broad question includes several specific components, and these other questions constitute my three-pronged rhetorical analysis. The first prong analyzes the rhetorical situations BAS operated in and the role of credibility/authority in those evolving rhetorical situations. The second prong analyzes BAS’s ability to build voice,
audience, and position. The third prong analyzes the interplay of logic and emotions in BAS’s arguments. The order of the analyses is worth noting: While all three analyses compare and contrast the first and second efforts, the first analysis sets the context in which the second and third analyses play out. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the rhetorical situations before moving into the details of audience and argument.

Below is an outline of the three sets of questions, an explanation of the resources I use to answer the questions, and a description of the theories informing my work.

**Set 1**

- How did BAS react to the rhetorical failure of the first effort in 1991 to remove Amalga Barrens from consideration as a dam site?
- What rhetorical changes did it implement during the successful second effort in the late 1990s based on its experience working with a lobbyist during the first effort?
- How did the rhetorical situation change from the first and second efforts, and how did BAS respond to those changes?
- How did it change its approach to building its own credibility with key policymakers?

The answers to this first set of questions constitute Chapter III. I drew upon Aristotle’s definition of ethos (credibility and authority) as a persuasive appeal, L. Bitzer’s definition of a rhetorical situation, and S. Daniels and G. Walker’s collaborative learning approach. Genre theory and social constructionist theory were also part of the analytical mix as they intertwined with rhetoric and collaborative learning. I interviewed BAS, media, and local and state government sources as well as analyzed documents and
news articles from both time periods (early 1990s and late 1990s) because the rhetorical situation changed over the 10-year period between efforts. As a result of the evolving rhetorical situation, credibility and authority proved to be a critical turning point in BAS’s strategy. A careful analysis of the documents, media coverage, and interviews revealed how ethos tipped success in BAS’s favor. Sample documents informing this analysis include letters; fact sheets; summaries; position statements; and public meeting agendas, questions, and presentations.

Set 2

- How did BAS build a voice, gain an audience, and position itself in the political scene to be an influential stakeholder?

- Specifically, how did BAS (a) build a rhetorically significant voice internally with its members and externally with the Cache Valley community at large; (b) gain access to and achieve legitimacy with key government officials and policymakers; and (c) position its arguments to be considered along with those of other stakeholders?

Having a voice and being heard are critical elements in effective environmental advocacy, but they are not enough. Environmental groups have to be considered by the power brokers as legitimate stakeholders, and they have to be influential. BAS moved beyond voice and achieved influence. I drew upon S. Seneca’s theory of Trinity of Voice to examine BAS’s access to, influence over, and standing with key policymakers. Intermingling with the trinity theory was rhetoric and collaborative learning. Again, I interviewed my sources as well as analyzed news articles and documents from both time periods, including letters; position statements; fact sheets; summaries; a press release; and
public meeting agendas, questions, and presentations. Chapter IV of my dissertation constitutes the answers to the second set of questions.

Set 3

- How did BAS craft its arguments to convince the Utah State Legislature to abandon the proposed Amalga Barrens dam site?

- Specifically, how did BAS combine emotion and logic (scientific data) to convince key policymakers that the Amalga Barrens proposal was (a) destructive to the wetlands as a habitat for migratory shore birds; (b) an expensive endeavor that would place heavy financial burdens on taxpayers, including Cache Valley taxpayers who would not receive water supplied by the dam; (c) devastating to the livelihoods of profitable farmers, and (d) scientifically problematic due to high salinity levels in the water and ground?

It was clear from a cursory review of the Amalga Barrens documents and media coverage that BAS combined logic and emotion in the construction and delivery of its arguments. The language and arrangement of those arguments and the interplay of persuasive appeals led to BAS’s success. Again, I drew upon a number of theories to find out how: Aristotle’s definitions of logos (logic) and pathos (emotions) as persuasive appeals and the closely related theory of genre. Once again, I interviewed BAS, media, and local and state government sources as well as analyzed documents and news articles from both time periods, including letters; position statements; fact sheets; summaries; a press release; and public meeting agendas, questions, and presentations. Chapter V of my dissertation constitutes the answers to the third set of questions.
**Research, Pedagogical, and Practical Implications**

Answers to these questions have research, pedagogical, and practical implications. The principal research and pedagogical implications are the focus on strategic communication. Instructors can use this research to demonstrate to students how strategic communication functions in an organization and how it benefits an organization’s bottom line. Students can begin to learn from this case study how to be rhetorical strategists, especially in situations with perceived insurmountable odds. Students can then take what they have learned in college to the workplace where they use their unique strategic communication skills and knowledge to provide organizational value beyond tactics.

Practitioners and researchers can build on this research by collaborating in the workplace to study strategic communication as it is happening. The researchers act as practitioners in conducting action research while providing services for community groups that lack resources and communication expertise. Finally, more research in environmental communication can move the field forward as a robust area of research, help integrate environmental communication into the undergraduate and graduate curricula, and help meet the growing demand for skilled environmental communicators in organizations everywhere.

**Research Methodology**

To gather data, I conducted a rhetorical analysis using J. Selzer’s (2004) approach: “An effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language” (p. 281). Rhetorical analysis is more than just a method for understanding persuasion: It is also about appreciating the ways people
manipulate language for persuasive purposes. Rhetorical analysis, therefore, requires a careful examination of texts and contexts that can be understood and appreciated as both productive and interpretative—“the study of language” and “the study of how to use it” (Selzer, 2004, p. 280). Rhetorical analysis, then, allowed me to examine language within a rhetorical context, interpret how language is manipulated, and recommend a potential set of strategies for future use.

I understand, however, that specific rhetorical situations influence specific rhetorical strategies and outcomes, and few rhetorical situations are ever exactly the same. The objective of my dissertation is not to generalize the Amalga Barrens to all other environmental controversies. There are, however, some common elements inherent in environmental advocacy work that can be a starting point for developing effective communication strategies. My objective, then, is to build on the work of other researchers by examining untapped environmental controversies and seeking to understand how rhetoric influences outcomes. As researchers collect more data, they are more able to map the field and focus on communication strategies that can be applied to a broad range of environmental issues. I also understand that my rhetorical analysis cannot tell me everything there is to know about rhetoric and the Amalga Barrens. There are some rhetorical perspectives (e.g., visual rhetoric) that can be used to examine the same texts, but they are outside the scope of my dissertation. I, therefore, acknowledge that my analysis is partial, but it is effective at helping me understand the Amalga Barrens controversy in a way not yet understood.

Rhetorical analysis is an exciting research methodology despite its limitations. An incomplete analysis is not a bad thing. Researchers can open the door and enter a
rhetorical situation a number of times and come through the other side each time with deeper and extended insights. As Selzer (2004) argued, rhetorical analysis can be part of an open-ended conversation that enhances a community’s way of learning and teaching (p. 303).

**Research and Analysis**

Rhetorical analysis is a broad methodology that can include any number of analytical screens. Not all screens are necessary to perform a rhetorical analysis. Researchers choose their specific screens based on their research questions, and my project is no different. My analysis focused mainly on Aristotle’s definitions of ethos (credibility and authority), pathos (emotions, values, beliefs, and attitudes), and logos (data, facts, common sense, and sound reasoning); L. Bitzer’s argument for appropriately responding to rhetorical situations; S. Daniels and G. Walker’s model for collaborative learning; S. Senecah’s public participation theory called Trinity of Voice—which is about building trust through persuasive language and audience identification. I supplemented these analytical screens with additional and complementary theories, such as the social constructionist model for public participation (learn from each other through two-way communication); and genre theory (documents serve a social, functional, and transformational purpose).

To understand rhetoric’s full complexity, it is necessary to study both texts and contexts. Selzer (2004) argues that rhetorical texts are produced and distributed within rhetorical situations; therefore, text and context cannot be separated. Clues about context are always embedded in text, so it makes sense to employ both kinds of analysis at the
same time, and that is what I have done. Analysis 1 focuses on the context in which the Amalga Barrens texts were produced and distributed. The details of the texts themselves are the focus of analyses two and three.

Specifically, I used the following analytical screens to examine both texts and contexts during the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy:

- **Situation (context):** the political climate and environmental attitudes in Utah during the 1990s
- **Language (style):** words (including metaphors) used to describe the rhetorical situation and the environment, words used to establish emotions and logic, stories told
- **Author and audience:** who created the texts, why, and for whom
- **Argument and arrangement:** what the arguments were and how they were ordered in the texts; what changed and what stayed the same between the first and second efforts
- **Delivery (genre):** how the arguments were distributed
- **Communication flow:** how audiences communicated with each other
- **Social interactions:** what audiences learned from each other and how they built community identification through shared experiences

**Institutional Review Board**

Because I wanted to conduct interviews, I applied for exempt status from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Utah State University and was granted approval under Protocol #4384. In an approval letter addressed to me (student researcher) and my
major professor (principal investigator) at the time, the IRB determined that my study was exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2:

“Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through the identifiers linked to the subjects: and (b) any disclosure of human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.”

As part of the approval process, I submitted a list of interview questions, which can be found in Appendix D, and drafted an “Informed Consent” document, which is available in Appendix E. I conducted all interviews April 2012 under the 4384 protocol number. However, my major professor changed in October 2012, and I, therefore, resubmitted my study to the IRB for approval of a new principal investigator. Approval was granted under Protocol #4784, and this new protocol number replaced the previous one. At the completion of my study in May 2013, the IRB closed Protocol #4784.

**Interview Methods**

I was initially introduced to the Amalga Barrens controversy by two professors in the English Department and one professor in the Department of Environment and Society, who gave me the name of the B. Dixon, the president of BAS at the time of the controversy in the late 1990s. I contacted him, and he graciously allowed me to copy his archive of documents from the first and second efforts. I also began to conduct other
types of archival research in libraries, government agencies, the Department of State Archives, and newspaper databases and microfiche collections. By reading all these documents, and by talking with B. Dixon, I learned who the players were during the controversy and developed a list of people to contact for interviews. Recognizing that I could not and need not interview all 20 people on my list, I decided to focus on individuals with specialized knowledge who played key roles in affected entities such as BAS, local and state governments, the state legislature, the Amalga community, and the local newspapers.

B. Dixon represented BAS’s perspective and was my most important interviewee. I contacted A. Lindahl, who was also a key BAS figure, but she was unavailable for an interview. W. Martinson represented the lobbyist perspective during the first effort and was still involved in Audubon issues, although not as a lobbyist, at the time of his interview. He, too, was an important interviewee. For the government perspective, I interviewed L. Anhder of Cache County and D. Strong of the Utah Division of Water Resources. Both individuals were heavily involved in the controversy from the very beginning, but D. Strong’s point of view was absolutely necessary to understand. For the legislative perspective, I contacted Senator L. Hillyard, who is still working in the legislature. His institutional knowledge as a long-time legislator and senator representing Cache County was crucial to understanding both the legislative and community points of view. I also contacted Senator M. Waddoups, the sponsor of the bill to remove the Barrens from the Bear River Development Act, but he declined to be interviewed, saying that all he remembered about the issue was that the Barrens proposal was too expensive. That information was corroborated by several other individuals, so I did not feel I needed
to pursue his perspective anymore. I found out through archival research that Senator J. Holmgren passed away shortly after the controversy ended. Finally, I thought about contacting Representative E. Anderson and Senator F. Finlinson, but I was satisfied with the information I received about them through other interviews, archival documents, and newspaper reports, so I did not pursue them for interviews. For the community perspective, I interviewed long-time Amalga Town Mayor D. Wood. He was mayor during the controversy and is still mayor today. He spoke well for the community. For the media perspective, I interviewed Herald Journal reporter J. Wise, who covered the controversy in both the early and late 1990s, and Herald Journal editor T. Vitale, who was primarily involved in the early 1990s when the controversy started and continued to live in Cache Valley (and still does) throughout the controversy. Even though the Herald Journal provided the most consistent coverage of the controversy, I contacted two reporters each from the Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News. Unfortunately, they remembered little and could not provide additional information or perspective that was not already available to me in their news articles. In all, I contacted 14 individuals for interviews, eight of whom granted interviews.

I made my initial contacts with prospective interviewees through email, but all interviews were conducted in person, except for J. Wise’s interview, which was conducted over the phone. The interviews ranged from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the individual’s level of involvement and their recollections of the issue. My questions focused on their recollection of the controversy, the arguments they prepared or heard, the audiences they targeted, the public events they attended, and the communication strategy they witnessed or developed. I recorded all interviews using a digital recorder.
and hired a former professional writing student to transcribe the interviews. She prepared an executive summary of each interview that also included interesting direct quotes. I did take brief notes during the interviews just in case the recordings failed, but I did not use them once I received the executive summaries. After I completed and analyzed the eight interviews, I felt satisfied that they provided accurate and comprehensive information of the Barrens wetlands controversy and I determined that no further interviews were necessary.
CHAPTER III
ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE ETHOS FOR EVOLVING RHETORICAL SITUATIONS

In this chapter, I focus on answering the first set of questions introduced in the second chapter. The questions are as follows:

- How did Bridgerland Audubon Society (BAS) react to the rhetorical failure of the first effort in 1991 to remove Amalga Barrens from consideration as a dam site?
- What rhetorical changes did it implement during the successful second effort in the late 1990s based on its experience working with a lobbyist during the first effort?
- How did the rhetorical situation change from the first and second efforts, and how did BAS respond to those changes?
- How did it change its approach to building its own credibility with key policymakers?

I drew upon Aristotle’s definition of ethos (credibility and authority) as a persuasive appeal, L. Bitzer’s definition of a rhetorical situation, and S. Daniels and G. Walker’s collaborative learning approach. Genre theory and social constructionist theory were also part of the analytical mix as they intertwined with rhetoric and collaborative learning. I interviewed BAS, media, and local and state government sources as well as analyzed documents and news articles from both time periods (early 1990s and late 1990s) because the rhetorical situation changed over the 10-year period between efforts. As a result of the evolving rhetorical situation, credibility and authority proved to be a critical turning point in BAS’s strategy. A careful analysis of the documents, media
coverage, and interviews revealed how ethos tipped success in BAS’s favor. Sample documents informing this analysis include letters; fact sheets; summaries; position statements; and public meeting agendas, questions, and presentations.

**First Effort: Lobbying**

BAS made an effort to delist the Barrens in 1991. This effort failed. The genres used during this time reveal a communication strategy that centered primarily on traditional lobbying efforts through a larger coordinating network of Audubon chapters in Utah. This network was called the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, and BAS was a part of this network. Through an analysis of the genres used during this first effort, we see that all communication on BAS’s behalf was done through the Coordinating Council, and the main communication strategist was a lobbyist named W. Martinson. His job was to lobby the Utah State Legislature regarding issues that affected the Audubon Society in general. The Barrens was one of four issues the Coordinating Council was trying to influence during the 1991 legislative session. So, the Barrens did not have the full attention of the lobbyist.

As part of his communication strategy, the lobbyist did four things.

1. He attended legislative committee meetings to lobby on behalf of the Coordinating Council.
2. He encouraged Audubon members to call, write, and meet with their legislators.
3. He provided Audubon members with educational materials on how a bill becomes a law, how to lobby legislators, and other materials such as position statements, fact sheets, and form letters.
4. He kept members informed. He recorded weekly phone messages and provided them with two written updates. One update was during the session and the other one was after the session ended.

Figure 7 depicts a variety of genres that show the communication flow going from the lobbyist to Audubon members, including BAS. The solid lines represent genres that are in the BAS archive. The dotted lines represent genres not in the archive, but they are mentioned in the genres that are available. Genres include letters from W. Martinson to Audubon members (Figure 8), a fact sheet (Figure 9), form letters (Figure 10), a position statement, and a legislative summary report and the table of contents to a documentation binder W. Martinson prepared for the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah (Figure 11).

It is apparent that the main flow of communication came from the lobbyist to BAS and to the legislature. There is no evidence that BAS members lobbied the legislature. (See Figure 7.) There is evidence, however, that a scientific expert made a presentation to a legislative committee, but it is unknown who coordinated his appearance. It may have been the lobbyist, because all indications point to a passive grassroots effort and an active traditional lobbying effort. (It was passive in the sense that BAS may not have been communicating directly, or communicating very little, with the legislature. The lobbyist was the active communicator in the sense that he did most of the communicating on BAS’s behalf.)
Figure 7. Communication flow during the first effort in 1991 to delist the Amalga Barrens wetlands as a possible dam site.
Figure 8. A letter lobbyist W. Martinson sent before the 1991 legislative session started to encourage Audubon members to assist him in lobbying the legislature.
Figure 9. A fact sheet lobbyist W. Martinson prepared that stated the position of the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah regarding the Barrens proposal and gave background on why the Barrens should not be developed.
Figure 10. Form letters for statewide Audubon members to sign and send to their respective senators and representatives.
Figure 11. A 1991 legislative summary and table of contents of a documentation binder lobbyist W. Martinson prepared for the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah.
Second Effort: Community Involvement

The second effort to delist the Barrens began in 1997 and continued through at least 1999. This effort succeeded in large part because the communication strategy and use of genres changed dramatically. The strategy shifted from educating the legislators to educating the public at the local level. BAS president B. Dixon said, “Our main communication strategy was . . . to inform the public as much as we could. It was not enough to educate the legislators because they already had their minds made up [about developing the Bear River]” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Instead of taking on a passive role, BAS became an active player and took on the role of communication strategist. As the strategist, BAS initiated a number of communication activities that really made all the difference for them in influencing public policy to remove the Amalga Barrens from consideration, not to stop Bear River water development. (The legislature did not have its mind made up about the Barrens.) The legislature was no longer the direct target as it had been before. Bridgerland aimed their communication activities toward a person who could then influence the legislature, and that was D. Strong, the deputy director of the Utah Division of Water Resources. BAS knew who had standing with the legislature, and it wasn’t the lobbyist. It was the public official authorized to make impartial decisions about water development in the Bear River Basin. His recommendations carried clout. Aristotle’s ethos played a key role in two ways. First, BAS’s ethos increased in the community when it took the responsibility to be the main communication strategist for the opposition. Second, BAS recognized that D. Strong’s ethos was higher with the legislature than its own ethos because of his position and impartiality as a state government official; therefore, BAS used its high community-level
ethos to influence D. Strong while he was visiting the community and then allowed D. Strong to directly influence the legislature.

Figure 12 shows the flow of communication originating from BAS to a number of new audiences, including the Utah State Division of Water Resources, Cache County, the town of Amalga, scientific experts, the community, and the media. Again, the solid lines represent genres that are in the BAS archive. The dotted lines represent genres not in the archive, but they are mentioned in the genres that are available. There was no direct lobbying effort to the legislature from the lobbyist. Just looking at the communication flow in Figure 12 might give the impression that the use of genres remained limited, even more limited than the 1991 effort. However, this is not true. It is helpful to understand that the main communication activities in 1997 and 1999 were two public meetings in Smithfield, Utah, represented on the diagram in red. The first was in December 1997 and the second was in January 1999. B. Dixon said that the public meetings were the most important activities BAS did to influence public policy. Public officials as well as scientific experts were invited to speak at these public meetings to provide information about the proposal to the community, and, in turn, the community was invited to ask questions of the panelists and voice their concerns about the proposal. This move shows the value of S. Daniels and G. Walker’s (2001) collaborative learning approach, which specifies that good public policy decisions are made when opportunities are created to involve an informed citizenry (p. xiii).
Figure 13 shows the communication flow related to the public meetings. It is clear that the use of genres became quite complicated, and the complexity of audiences increased dramatically. The diagram shows that BAS originated many communication activities to a variety of audiences that were followed by communication back to each other. For example, BAS held two public meetings that were attended by the media, Cache County officials, Division of Water Resources managers, Amalga Town residents, scientific experts from Utah State University, concerned community members known as Friends of the Barrens, and legislators. Representatives from several of these groups gave presentations at the public meetings; others asked questions to be informed, and reporters
covered the meetings for their respective newspapers. From there, information continued to be communicated in fact sheets, newsletters, and letters to one another. Thus, communication did not flow in one direction from a single communicator such as was evident in 1991. Instead, communication flowed in many directions, with BAS initiating many of the activities to get the conversation started. The multiple audiences kept the conversation going.

Figure 13. Communication flow related to the public meetings shows BAS originating many communication activities to a variety of audiences that were followed by communication back to each other.
The second-effort genres include a flier (Figure 14), factsheet (Figure 15), a newsletter and public meeting agenda (Figure 16), and a question-and-answer form participants at the public meetings could use to ask questions of the panelists and a press release (Figure 17).

Figure 14. A flier announcing the first public meeting in 1997.
The Cache Valley Barrens is a unique natural area in Utah. The shallow ponds, extensive marshes, mud flats, pastures, fallow fields, agricultural croplands, ponds, and waters of Clay Slough produce a variety and interspersion of habitats which provide prime nesting, resting, and feeding areas for over 100 species of birds. There are 1400 acres of wetland on the site. These are natural wetlands. Close inspection of the shallow ponds in the spring and fall reveals an amazing abundance of aquatic invertebrates which provide food base for many water-loving birds.

The unique aspects can be traced to the geomorphology of the area. It is a natural depression lined with a heavy clay layer beneath the surface soil. Spring snowmelt tends to accumulate here, unable to percolate rapidly to the aquifer below. Because of the snowmelt and the natural springs, the area is a large series of shallow ponds during the spring. These are perfect conditions for the development of high densities of pond invertebrates, on which the shorebirds and waterfowl feed during migration. These high quality food sources are needed for feeding young shorebirds of species which nest in the area.

By summer, these shallow pans dry up, leaving the soil alkaline. This allows growth of scrubby salt-tolerant plants, and still harbors the invertebrate eggs which will hatch in the next rainy season. It is much different from the deep water permanent cattail marsh which is widespread throughout Cache Valley. The temporary shallow pond environment is the condition for which many shorebird species are perfectly adapted: Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover, Black-necked stilt, and others.

This area is important to naturalists, hunters, photographers and students. Annual shorebird census data from the Barrens form part of an international data base through Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. Utah State University ornithology students, field ecology students, introductory biology students, and kids’ ecology trips all know the Barrens as that place that is teeming with life in the spring. Records of birds from the Barrens are regularly reported in American Birds and Utah ornithological journals and books. Several graduate dissertations are based on studies conducted here.

A central portion of the area is managed for waterfowl hunting, the Barrens company Hunting Club, and provides good fall shooting of ducks and geese for its members.

About 30 species of birds nest in the Barrens and about 20 others forage here during the nesting season. Many species of migrants stop here each year to feed and rest on their way to and from their more northern breeding areas, including about 17 species of
Figure 16. A BAS newsletter announcing the first public meeting in 1997 and encouraging people to attend, and an agenda from the second public meeting in 1999.
Figure 17. A form attendees could fill out to ask a question of anyone on the panel at the public meetings, and a press release about the second public meeting in 1999.
Comparison Between First and Second Efforts

Analyzing the genres and communication strategy for the 1991 effort makes clear that the communication strategy was linear and the use of genres and audiences was limited. (See Figure 7.) Documents from that time period indicate that W. Martinson was making most of the communication decisions and the contacts. (See Figures 8-11.) The community members were depending on the lobbyist to work on their behalf. It may be that some community members did as the lobbyist encouraged them to do, and that was to send a form letter or call their legislator, but there is no evidence of that. (See Figure 10.) Regardless, these were still passive activities, because it is not known whether the legislator read the letter or had a conversation with anyone from BAS about the Barrens.

Even though this initial effort to delist the Barrens failed, all was not completely lost. This early effort accomplished two things that later helped BAS. First, there was better documentation for the argument that the Barrens should not be developed. W. Martinson gathered data (even though much was not available) from preliminary studies, highlighted the points referring to the Barrens, and distributed that information to the legislature. He also collected the materials he produced as part of his lobbying effort into a binder and provided a copy to BAS. Furthermore, BAS, as part of the Cache Valley Environmental Coalition, went on record as early as 1989 as an opponent of the Amalga Barrens proposal, citing both its economic and environmental concerns. Second, opposition to the Barrens early in the process allowed decision-makers to look at other Cache Valley alternatives such as expanding the Hyrum Dam and building a dam near Avon.
During the second effort, which was successful at delisting the Barrens, the communication strategy changed from linear to collaborative as more audiences became involved in the issue and as they began to speak to one another in an open and cooperative environment. (See Figure 12.) The community was heading this effort, not a lobbyist and not the public officials, although the public officials were certainly an important part of the communication equation. They participated in both public meetings organized by BAS in 1997 and 1999 and were willing to join the conversation and provide information to the community. The community members, therefore, became advocates for protecting the wetlands and their quality of life, and as advocates, they worked to increase public pressure on public officials and legislators. This change in strategy reflects the argument by L. Bitzer that situations are rhetorical, which means that arguments must match the needs of the rhetorical situations. A mismatch results in a rhetorical failure, and that was evident during the first effort when the lobbyist’s rhetoric did not match the needs of the situation in which he was operating, which was that he was trying to lobbying the legislature as a whole body instead of targeting specific legislators.

B. Dixon said that he felt the public meetings were vital to delisting the Barrens, because afterward the deputy director of the Utah Division of Water Resources went before the legislature and recommended that the Barrens no longer be considered as a site for water development (personal communication, October 1, 2008). Because of the deputy director’s influence and standing as a public official (high ethos), the legislature accepted his recommendation and removed the Barrens from the Bear River Development Project in 2002. D. Strong revealed that another legislator, Representative E. Anderson, a Democrat from Tremonton, was also influential with the legislature (high
ethos), and his recommendation coupled with D. Strong’s put pressure on the legislature to make a political decision to remove the Barrens as a possible dam site. “The locals convinced him that he should pass legislation to eliminate the Barrens from consideration by the state, and he did that” (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012). E. Anderson introduced House Bill 92 to amend the Bear River Development Act and was able to get Senator M. Waddoups, a Republican from the Salt Lake valley, to sponsor the senate side. D. Strong said he believes M. Waddoups sponsored the bill “because of pressure from the water resources council and BAS” (personal communication, April 18, 2012). Thus, the first effort shows that lobbying the legislature as a whole body was ineffective, while targeting specific individuals with influence was the key to success.

An important part of the public meetings was the Q&A session where most of the collaborative learning took place. Attendees could fill out a form to ask a question of anyone on the panel. (See Figure 17.) They could ask the question themselves or ask the meeting moderator to do it for them. It is also significant that these meetings were held in the affected community at a time when local citizens could attend and become involved. In addition, the genres used in association with these public meetings helped make the grassroots strategy work. Figure 13 shows that the use of genres became quite complicated. The complexity of the genres and audiences changed dramatically during the second effort, and this complexity actually created communication flow that was collaborative in nature. BAS originated many communication activities to a variety of audiences that were followed by communication back to each other. In other words, communication did not flow in one direction from a single communicator such as was evident in 1991. Instead, communication flowed in many directions, with BAS initiating
many of the activities to get the conversation started. The multiple audiences kept the conversation going. Thus, the communication strategy to engage in productive dialogue, learn from each other, and respect all points of view at the community level helped BAS convince D. Strong and E. Anderson that the Amalga Barrens was an unacceptable site for water development. They, in turn, convinced the legislature of the same thing. Through active and targeted grassroots efforts, people influential with the legislature heard the collective voice of the community firsthand and clearly understood how the community felt about the Barrens proposal.

In summary, during the first effort in 1991, the communication strategy was linear and the use of genres was limited. The communication strategist was the lobbyist who was focusing his attention on at least three other issues besides the Barrens. Furthermore, communication flowed from the lobbyist to the legislature and to BAS, which may have contributed to BAS’s taking on a passive role. And, the use of genres was limited to only those activities the lobbyist needed to pass on information. During the 1997 through 1999 effort, BAS moved from having a passive role to a very active role, and genres show that they took the lead in making things happen in their community. (See Figures 14-17.) As the communication strategist, BAS collaborated with a variety of audiences to get and keep the conversation going, and they did so in a cooperative environment in their own community. Furthermore, they targeted their message to a public official and northern Utah legislator who held clout with the legislature. Community-based communication proved to be an effective way of saving the Barrens because it also stirred up the locals, who put pressure on the same public official and legislator. Therefore, BAS was trying to
make the Amalga Barrens present (on the minds of the people) in a variety public spheres in order to change public policy.

Four Important Points

From this analysis, we can learn four important points. First, traditional lobbying efforts may not be an effective way to change public policy if that is all an organization is going to do. B. Dixon said that after the failed lobbying attempt in the early 1990s, BAS knew they needed to educate the public. Even so, W. Martinson’s work cannot be completely dismissed, because his initial efforts laid the foundation for the second effort in the late 1990s. In the beginning, W. Martinson said, it was important for the public to know about the Barrens issue and contact the legislature with its concerns. “It was obvious that we were a concerned and committed people who were able to provide good information . . . we were clearly trying to highlight that the Barrens was a really bad place to build a dam” (W. Martinson, personal communication, April 19, 2012). From his experience watching events unfold with Representative E. Anderson and within his own state agency, D. Strong said he believes lobbying is more effective at the local level rather than at the state level. “I am trying to help local communities, but if communities decide that they do not want the help, then I believe that it is the right of local communities to make that decision” (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

Second, an active (strategic) rather than passive (uncritical) grassroots effort appears to be more effective. While this analysis focuses on the documents in the BAS archive, it is apparent from the interviews I conducted that Amalga residents were also
engaged in opposing the Barrens dam site, although it appears that many of their activities were separate from BAS’s. Amalga residents, however, did join their voices with the collective whole, which strengthened the work BAS was undertaking, and Amalga residents supported the public meetings BAS organized in 1997 and 199. According to Amalga Mayor D. Wood, community involvement became important, and one resident, J. Maynard, quickly volunteered to act as a liaison between Amalga and the county and state. “As the voice of Amalga, he gave the opinion of the town . . . he gave the facts and how it would affect our town with lost income and quality of life” (D. Wood, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

Third, targeted communication using a collaborative communication strategy in a cooperative environment appears to be more effective than one-way communication. The public meeting agenda in Figure 16 and the audiences identified in the communication flow diagram in Figure 12 show that BAS clearly identified and targeted strategic audiences that had influence in a variety of spheres, including the public sphere through the media, the political sphere, and the scientific sphere. BAS’s communication strategy took place primarily in the affected community where proponents and opponents could engage in dialogue and learn more. B. Dixon said, “Our main communication strategy was to bring information based on data to light; we wanted to inform people as much as we could” (personal communication, April 12, 2012), and part of that strategy was to hold public meetings where all statements, positions, and concerns were accepted and welcomed, B. Dixon said. By doing so, BAS built ethos, or credibility, with its audiences, even the ones who did not share its same views, including L. Anhder of the Cache County Water Council and Cache County Water Policy Board. L. Anhder said he liked B.
Dixon a lot, and even though they didn’t always agree, the conversations between them were always civil and he could trust the information B. Dixon provided him (personal communication, April 20, 2012).

Fourth, the more complex the use of genres and audiences, the more widespread the conversation. Figure 13 shows that myriad of conversations taking place among a variety of audiences. It appears that through these conversations, a great deal of learning took place, and strategic audiences were then able to understand the will of the community regarding the proposed Barrens dam site. It became clear, according the D. Strong, that the community did not want the dam because of the extraordinary cost to the environment and the state’s tax coffers (personal communication, April 18, 2012).
CHAPTER IV
PREPARING AN ARGUMENT BY BUILDING A VOICE,
GAINING AN AUDIENCE, AND ESTABLISHING POSITION

In this chapter, I focus on answering the second set of questions introduced in the second chapter. These questions are as follows:

- How did Bridgerland Audubon Society (BAS) build a voice, gain an audience, and position itself in the political scene to be an influential stakeholder?
- Specifically, how did BAS (a) build a rhetorically significant voice internally with its members and externally with the Cache Valley community at large; (b) gain access to and achieve legitimacy with key government officials and policymakers; and (c) position its arguments to be considered along with those of other stakeholders?

Having a voice and being heard are critical elements in effective environmental advocacy, but they are not enough. Environmental groups have to be considered by the power brokers as legitimate stakeholders, and they have to be influential. According to S. Senecah (2004), the Trinity of Voice—access, standing, and influence—sets the benchmark against which to plan or evaluate environmental participatory processes, and it plays a transformative role in building community capacity (p. 13). “Effective participatory processes have the potential not only to support good environmental decision making but also to build a community’s ability to engage other issues in more productive ways that support a solid civic base and a higher quality of community experience and relationships” (Senecah, 2004, p. 14). It all leads to trust, and that is certainly evident in the news articles, interviews, and Bridgerland Audubon Society
documents I analyzed for this chapter of my dissertation. Based on my analysis, I
discovered that BAS moved beyond voice and achieved influence with its various
audiences by engaging in the following practical tactics:

1. Educating the public
2. Practicing civility
3. Establishing credibility
4. Proposing an alternative solution
5. Making decisions based on data
6. Recognizing common ground
7. Getting the media involved
8. Moving forward against the odds
9. Building on what has been done before

Each of the nine strategies is numbered and discussed in detail below. I conclude
with some final thoughts about the impact of these strategies.

**Educating the Public**

BAS reacted to the failed first attempt by recognizing that educating the
legislature as a whole through a lobbyist was not effective. To be more effective during
the second attempt, BAS analyzed the changed rhetorical situation (as advocated by L.
Bitzer), changed directions, and began focusing on the community—it moved the
communication focus to the local level in order to connect with individuals who were
interested and concerned. B. Dixon, BAS president during the second effort, said, “Our
main communication strategy was to bring this information to light; we wanted to inform
people as much as we could” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). He was referring to the arguments that were consistently communicated during the second effort: the dam would be expensive, more expensive than conservation; the irreplaceable bird habitat would be harmed; and the dam would negatively impact the community. While it is clear that the legislature, as the decision-makers, were still the main target to be influenced, it appears that BAS’s new communication strategy was to focus on educating the public, get them emotionally connected to the issue through persuasive arguments (application of Aristotle’s pathos), and encourage the public to share their concerns with their specific legislators who would then go back to the legislative body as a whole and speak for the community they represented (application of Aristotle’s ethos).

Even though BAS’s main concern was for the Barrens bird habitat, it clearly recognized that not everyone felt the same, so it created a portfolio of arguments and communicated these arguments to the audiences who would be persuaded by them. For the legislators and other public officials, the cost to construct the dam and the cost to mitigate wetland loss were the most important arguments; for the BAS members and others who cared about protecting the environment, the loss of a special and irreplaceable wetland was most important; and for Cache Valley residents, especially Amalga town residents, the loss of quality of life was the best argument. Then, BAS became engaged in communicating these targeted messages in a variety of venues—newspapers, town meetings, legislative meetings, and public hearings (B. Dixon, personal communication, April 12, 2012).

The strategy appears to have worked, as noted by D. Strong of the Utah Division of Water Resources and T. Vitale of the Herald Journal. D. Strong attended the second
public meeting in Cache Valley in 1999, attended by more than 100 people, and learned firsthand how strongly the community opposed the Amalga Barrens dam. He was there to both inform and learn, keeping an open mind that the community must decide for itself what it wanted (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012). After he understood the opposition’s point of view and desires, he, as an influential public official, recommended to the legislature that the Amalga Barrens dam be removed from the list of sites under consideration. According to T. Vitale, one reason the issue received so much media coverage was because of BAS’s ability to “fire up” the community with its passionate arguments, play it smart by educating themselves and others, and have a presence in every forum where the dam proposal was discussed (personal communication, April 12, 2012). The interplay of ethos, logos, and pathos is evident in the above strategy.

**Practicing Civility**

The importance of practicing civility is one of the main takeaways from this analysis. A number of people noticed how civilly BAS members and others in the community conducted themselves when discussing this issue and attribute this civility to resolving the Amalga Barrens dam controversy (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012; W. Martinson, personal communication, April 19, 2012; T. Vitale, personal communication, April 12, 2012; J. Wise, personal communication, April 13, 2012; D. Wood, personal communication, April 20, 2012). B. Dixon attributes BAS’s success in establishing its ethos and, therefore, its standing with the public to “speaking calmly and articulately and not calling people idiots. It is important to recognize that
there are differences in opinions” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Civility is not a hallmark of today’s environmental movements, which are often characterized by angry protests, disrespectful criticism, and all-out rebellion or stubbornness. While protesters get their 15 minutes of fame on television (and good ratings for television stations), that fame is often short lived, discounted, and forgotten. With BAS’s civil approach of speaking calmly, articulately, and respectfully, its 15 minutes turned into two years of continuous coverage of information regarding the Amalga Barrens dam proposal where BAS ultimately succeeded in convincing key legislators and public officials that the proposal was bad public policy. As Amalga Mayor D. Wood indicated, people just wanted good information they could trust (personal communication, April 20, 2012). They did not want to walk the streets holding a protest sign. My interview with L. Anhder of the Cache County Council and Cache County Water Policy Board sheds light on how he approached the issue and perhaps why L. Anhder was ultimately unsuccessful at getting the dam. He said, “I was highly disappointed in how quickly the state Division of Water Resources backed away from [the Amalga Barrens proposal]. I did not think the opposition was that strong. I do not even think we got into the fight. We were facing each other and dancing around. We did not even get to throw any punches” (personal communication, April 20, 2012). His ethos took a hit when he underestimated the strength of the community’s opposition and his “we did not even get to throw any punches” attitude could not compete with the civility already established by BAS members and the community.
Establishing Credibility

In addition to practicing civility, BAS was successful at establishing credibility with its various audiences. Much of that was also due to its repeated efforts to educate the public and use arguments that made sense to their different audiences. The key to establishing credibility was building trust, and it was this trust that allowed BAS to have the ear and support of so many community members. This trust factor shows application of S. Senecah’s (2004) Trinity of Voice theory, which says that trust enhances community cohesiveness (p. 23). During the public meetings, BAS went out of its way to let people speak and to involve knowledgeable people. B. Dixon said, “We tried to treat them with respect and that goes a long way to build credibility” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Even L. Anhder, a proponent of the dam, trusted B. Dixon, an opponent of the dam, because the information B. Dixon provided was trustworthy (personal communication, April 20, 2012). The information was based on data from credible sources. For example, the cost of constructing the dam did not come from BAS, which was an organization not capable of making such estimates and, therefore, lacked credibility in this regard. The cost estimates came from the Division of Water Resources and the engineering firms it hired to conduct feasibility studies—organizations that had the authority and credibility to do such work. The media also considered BAS a credible source because BAS had proven through the public meetings it sponsored that it understood and respected all sides of the issues and could articulate their position convincingly. T. Vitale said, “When they [BAS members] came to the media, you knew these guys got it. They recognized that water users needed water. They
got all levels of the argument and they would go and try to work it out with people” (personal communication, April 12, 2012).

Proposing an Alternative Solution

Another key finding that explains why BAS was successful at building an audience, gaining a voice, and establishing position with decision-makers is its strategy to propose an alternative solution to the Amalga Barrens dam proposal. B. Dixon said, “[Conservation] drove everything; that was our mission” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Today, the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, which supplies water to most of the Salt Lake Valley and was one of the main organizations pushing for Bear River water development in the late 1980s, acknowledges that conservation is cheaper than development, and it reports in its 2011 Annual Report that water use has steadily declined since the inception of the “Slow the Flow” campaign in 1999 (p. 15). But, that was not always so. In the 1990s, conservation was not an unheard message, but it was an ignored message—until Bear River water development entered the message stream. As a conservation organization, BAS, starting as early as 1989, recognized the need to propose conservation as an alternative solution to Bear River water development. The Cache Valley Environmental Coalition (1989), of which BAS was a part, told the Bear River Task Force that “in order to develop Bear River water, the communities along the Wasatch Front will be required to demonstrate that they are making the best use of existing supplies, and that less environmentally damaging alternatives have been seriously considered” (p. 1). Through their efforts, BAS gave this message a voice that many heard, but the message really did not take hold until the second effort in the late
1990s when J. Wise, a *Herald Journal* reporter, asked B. Dixon for BAS’s reaction to the dam proposal. J. Wise wrote the following article based on a letter B. Dixon wrote to him:

“Dixon agrees that demand for water, especially downstate, is growing. But he believes water development planners are ignoring water conservation. ‘Utah is an arid land, but water is foolishly used,’ he wrote (in a letter to Senator J. Holmgren, Representative E. Olsen, and T. Erickson of the county Water Policy Advisory Board). ‘People can be seen raking their lawns and sweeping their driveways with a garden hose.’ Water conservation, combined with restrictions on development and long-range planning, not new and costly dams, are some of the things Dixon believes state planners need to look at. ‘Instead of a dam, we need more intelligent water resources and planning and conservation,’ said Dixon. ‘We need to preserve what wetlands and wildlife habitat we have in Utah because we will not get any more with growing population and development. The wildlife, especially migrating waterfowl and shorebirds, are more pressed than ever’” (1997a, p. 15).

Even so, the message was scrambled when public officials such as L. Anhder and legislators such as Senator L. Hillyard misunderstood the conservation message to mean that the community was apathetic to the water problem—that population growth was happening downstream along the Wasatch Front and current water supplies would not be able to keep up (L. Hillyard, personal communication, April 12, 2012); L. Anhder, personal communication, April 20, 2012). B. Dixon, however, stayed on message, providing data about Utah’s per capita water use. When it appeared in 1999 that the
opposition was gaining ground and that the Wasatch Front would not be getting its water from the Bear River, the Jordan Valley Conservancy District launched a water conservation campaign in 1999 that is still influencing water conservation today and that is considered one of the most successful environmental campaigns in Utah.

**Making Decisions Based on Data**

Several of the discussions already presented in this chapter indicate that BAS developed solid and convincing arguments by relying on data from credible sources such as scientific experts from the Utah State University, the Division of Water Resources, and engineering firms hired to study the feasibility of all proposed dam sites, including the Amalga Barrens. The interviews I conducted with lobbyist W. Martinson, T. Vitale, and J. Wise clearly point to the importance of that strategy, establishing that data gathered by the lobbyist was presented to the legislature in the early attempt as well as by BAS in the later attempt. Relying only on trustworthy sources of data, therefore, was a guiding principle for BAS (B. Dixon, personal communication, April 12, 2012). But why did it work in the second effort and not in the first effort? The evidence is not clear, but a possible answer is that not much data was available in the early 1990s when talk of Bear River development was in the beginning stages. Thus, any data that was available may have been incomplete. For example, it may have been difficult for people to understand how bird habitat would have been harmed and why it would have mattered, or how the proposal would have impacted the community. In other words, it appears that arguments to save the Amalga Barrens were not completely developed because there was a shortage of data. After the first attempt failed and BAS changed its strategy to communicate at the
local level and use local expertise from the university, it had time to gather data as it was becoming available in order to strengthen its arguments. BAS did not resort to extreme views or made-up science. For example, Utah State University geologist S. Janecke, wildlife biologist R. Ryel, and Utah State University social scientist J. Boettinger conducted research in the late 1990s and shared their research findings at the second BAS public meeting in 1999. A Herald Journal article by reporter A. Brunson (1999) indicates how prepared BAS was to support its position with more data, which in turn convinced D. Strong and Representative E. Anderson that the dam proposal was bad public policy.

**Recognizing Common Ground**

As mentioned in the section about educating the public, BAS recognized that its mission to conserve bird habitat was not a priority for everyone. B. Dixon knew that the economic message was most important with the legislature; therefore, BAS developed an economic argument based on data from the Division of Water Resources, which was in charge of studying the feasibility of building the Amalga Barrens dam. During the first effort, the proposed cost was $27 million to $79 million. During the second effort, when J. Holmgren, Republican senator from Bear River City in Box Elder County, proposed doubling the size of the Barrens reservoir, the cost shot up to $300 million. B. Dixon said, “At the end of the day, [the high cost] is what drove their decision [to take the Amalga Barrens off the list] (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Senator L. Hillyard agreed. He said that the controversy of removing the Barrens dam site was more of an economic issue rather than an environmental issue (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Thus, the economic message was a high priority, and the environmental message
was really low. During his interview, J. Wise said that he believed that public officials realized that there was no support for the water projects and that there was even less support in the community for the money to spend on it. He said, “The Amalga Barrens site, the last great hope for building a dam in Cache County, just proved to be too expensive” (personal communication, April 13, 2012).

According to D. Strong, L. Hillyard, and J. Wise, B. Dixon was right about his need to communicate an economic message and that the message had a positive effect. From their perspective, it was clear that the Amalga Barrens was delisted as a proposed dam site because it was too expensive and not because it was too environmentally sensitive. However, there is some ambiguity in the economic and environmental messages. During my interview, L. Hillyard said that economics drove the decision to delist the Barrens, but in a 1991 article by Salt Lake Tribune reporter J. Keahey, L. Hillyard is quoted as saying that “the Barrens is environmentally fragile” (p. A4). In the same year of 1991, J. Wise quoted L. Hillyard in an article titled “Plan Proposes Developing Hyrum Dam” as saying that “Hillyard wants the Barrens deleted from the list of Bear River projects because he believes the environmental costs of building the project are too high” (p. 1). A few months later, J. Wise quoted P. Gillette, a water resources official, in an article titled “Amalga Barrens Dam Blasted” as saying that “the environmental costs would be greater at the Barrens site” (p. 1). P. Gillette was referring to the dollar costs of mitigating 1,400 acres of federally protected wetlands. It could be that L. Hillyard was referring to the same thing because he also was talking about dollar costs of constructing the reservoir, but it is unclear. By 1997, when the controversy was heating up again, BAS did not ignore these earlier statements and framed its economic
message for public officials and legislators around concrete, tangible dollar costs of construction and mitigation, and the cost argument was delivered first. The more abstract, intangible costs of losing bird habitat and a view of the sunset were delivered second. For the public audience, the reverse was true: abstract first, concrete second.

It is also not clear why the 1991 study from the Division of Water Resources did not kill the Amalga Barrens dam proposal. It was certainly information the legislators like Senator L. Hillyard and Senator J. Holmgren would have received and considered. It could be that, as I will discuss in the section about moving forward against the odds, the few senators from northern Utah were outnumbered by the many senators from the Wasatch Front who wanted water from the Bear River, the last water resource in Utah yet to be developed. Thus, they may have perceived the Bear River as the last place to get water, and no cost was too great to get that water to a thirsty population. However, the section about recognizing common ground reveals that costs did become too great, causing the legislature to back away from the proposal. It appears, then, that there was an economic tipping point. A $27 million to $79 million dam in the early 1990s was acceptable, but a $300 million dam in the late 1990s was not.

**Getting the Media Involved**

BAS involved the media in its communication strategy because of the media’s ability to reach so many people with the data BAS had gathered from experts and official government reports and had used to craft its arguments. Community members also shared their concerns through letters to the editor, which complemented BAS’s argument that many in the community did not want the reservoir in Cache Valley. T. Vitale said that
media coverage of the controversy was pervasive (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Indeed, the controversy was covered locally by the Herald Journal and in Salt Lake City in the Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News. (These papers are also distributed throughout the Wasatch Front.) T. Vitale said that the controversy received so much attention due to three things: the lively debate, the two powerful sides, and high local concern for the environment (personal communication, April 12, 2012). It appears, then, that BAS, through its education efforts and opposition, helped create a controversy that engaged a variety of people in a lively but civil debate. Most of that debate took place at the community level where environmental issues were foremost in people’s minds. Such was not the case in Salt Lake City where the decision-makers were located. The economy was foremost in their minds. Thus, BAS communicated all of its arguments when speaking to the media, but rearranged their order depending on which audience the media outlet mostly reached. For example, BAS presented to locals an environmental message first, community impact message second, and cost message last. When speaking to a Wasatch Front audience, BAS presented an economic message first, environmental message second, and community impact last. As T. Vitale pointed out, BAS was smart about how to work with the media (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Evidently, B. Dixon understood well that the media could be a partner in educating the public about the issue and in keeping the conversation going until a final decision was made to delist the Barrens.

Incidentally, Herald Journal reporter J. Wise had an interesting experience regarding his first introduction to the Bear River waster development project, and his experience underscores the importance of never taking anything for granted when it
comes to information published in the paper. He said that he was reading the paper one day and saw a legal notice tucked away in the back of the paper in tiny print. The state had put in a request to appropriate water for future development of the Bear River. “I called around and starting asking about it, and before long, I was covering the issue” (J. Wise, personal communication, April 13, 2012). Thus, something as simple as a legal notice can motivate a reporter to research an issue. In this case, J. Wise started investigating the Bear River development proposal and stayed on top it throughout the 1990s. He knew the issue and key players well. When he reported on a Barrens dam story, he recognized credible information coming from credible sources. As already established earlier in this chapter, B. Dixon was one of those credible sources. Thus, the good relationship they developed to inform the public with concrete data, not abstract ideas, was a win-win for B. Dixon (get information out), for J. Wise (get a good story based on credible sources), and for the community (get information). The outcome, combined with all the other strategies discussed in this chapter, was that the Barrens was removed from consideration as a reservoir site.

**Moving Forward Against the Odds**

It is clear that, from the beginning, BAS and the Cache Valley community in general were fighting an uphill battle. The push to develop the Bear River was coming from Senator F. Finlinson, a Republican from Salt Lake City, and Senator J. Holmgren, and both were in a position to make it happen, according to lobbyist W. Martinson (personal communication, April 19, 2012). F. Finlinson was co-chairman of the Energy, Natural Resources, and Agriculture Interim Committee where the decision to move
forward with Bear River water development was initially made. F. Finlinson was getting his push from the water conservancy districts, such as the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, in charge of providing water to users living and working along the growing and developing Wasatch Front. J. Holmgren was chairman of the Bear River Task Force, which tasked the Division of Water Resources to study Bear River water development and make recommendations on how and where to proceed. It was through this work that the Amalga Barrens was proposed as an off-stream storage site. Thus, the water development issue was being driven by decision-makers in positions of power in the legislature located 90 miles south of Cache Valley where the Bear River was proposed for development. According to a 1999 *Herald Journal* article by reporter N. Farrell, Cache Valley residents felt insignificant in such a powerful political web (p. 10). W. Martinson captured the differing attitudes well: the legislature saw the Barrens as a place to get water, the residents saw the Barrens as a place for their farms (personal communication, April 19, 2012).

All was not well in Cache Valley, either. L. Anhder was an outspoken proponent of the Barrens reservoir proposal, and some Amalga town residents saw the reservoir as an opportunity to make money off the sale of their land (D. Wood, personal communication, April 18, 2012). It is not clear why L. Anhder was not able to gain more support when he was in a position of authority to do so. It could be that his resistance to understand the opposition’s view point and his desire to battle it out hindered his ability to form alliances like BAS did using the opposite approach of civility, respect, and openness. Despite all these challenges at home and down south, BAS and the community moved forward anyway, not knowing how things would turn out but still putting faith in
their ability to strategize and make a difference. In the end, they accomplished what they set out to do in part because they were strategic, civil, and credible.

**Building on What Has Been Done Before**

The success at the end perhaps could not have happened without the foundation laid at the beginning. Even though directly lobbying the legislative body as whole was not successful in the early 1990s, W. Martinson laid important groundwork that BAS would later build on in the late 1990s. For example, in documents he created to communicate to Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah members, W. Martinson characterized the political attitudes circulating at the time in the legislature about Bear River water development. These characterizations included an attitude of pro-water and pro-economic development. His characterizations had not changed by the time BAS was developing its strategy. Thus, the characterizations helped BAS better analyze its audiences and formulate its arguments.

Likewise, W. Martinson was instrumental in gathering data from credible sources and presenting this data to the legislature in context with the Audubon’s concerns. “We really did some good work” W. Martinson said. “We got information out to the legislators and it let the people know at the Water Resources that [the Amagla Barrens] was an issue” (W. Martinson, personal communication, April 19, 2012). BAS used this same data, and more as it became available from scientists S. Janecke, R. Ryel, and J. Boettinger, to formulate a communication strategy that would get the attention of legislators and public officials at the Division of Water Resources; except this time around, BAS would target individual legislators and officials who would then go back to
their respective government and legislative bodies and recommend a change in public policy.

In addition, the early opposition allowed BAS, as part of the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, to go on record with the legislature as an opponent of the proposal. The early opposition also allowed Cache Valley residents and organizations, including BAS once again, to go on record to explain why conservation must be part of the solution before any more water development projects move forward (Cache Valley Environmental Coalition, 1989). When the controversy began to heat up again in 1997, BAS’s opposition to the dam proposal was not fresh news, and there was a clear record to prove that BAS and the Cache Valley community considered the proposal bad public policy from the very beginning.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, even though it may take years to resolve an environmental issue, environmental advocacy groups would do well to go on record with their position at the very beginning and continue to strengthen their opposition by building on credible information as it becomes available.
CHAPTER V
CRAFTING AN ARGUMENT BY COMBINING LOGOS AND PATHOS

In this chapter, I focus on answering the third set of questions introduced in the second chapter. These questions are as follows:

- How did Bridgerland Audubon Society (BAS) craft its arguments to convince the Utah State Legislature to abandon the proposed Amalga Barrens dam site?
- Specifically, how did BAS combine emotion and logic (scientific data) to convince key policymakers that the Amalga Barrens proposal was (a) destructive to the wetlands as a habitat for migratory shore birds; (b) an expensive endeavor that would place heavy financial burdens on taxpayers, including Cache Valley taxpayers who would not receive water supplied by the dam; (c) devastating to the livelihoods of profitable farmers, and (d) scientifically problematic due to high salinity levels in the water and ground?

It is clear from the Amalga Barrens documents and media coverage that BAS combined logic and emotion in the construction and delivery of its arguments. The language and arrangement of those arguments and the interplay of persuasive appeals may have led to BAS’s success. It is not entirely clear how much memorable language and stories helped BAS, but it is evident from the interviews that the emotions surrounding the controversy have stayed with key players over the years and provided a context for remembering the arguments they heard and read about over and over again.

Again, I draw upon a number of theories to explain how the arguments were ordered, delivered, and remembered: Aristotle’s definitions of logos (logic) and pathos (emotions) as persuasive appeals and the closely related theory of genre.
This chapter is divided into three sections. They are as follows:

1. Evolution of BAS Arguments from 1989 to 1998: This first section follows the evolution of the arguments BAS presented to its audiences from the beginning in 1989 and during the first effort in the early 1990s and the second effort in the late 1990s.

2. Sample Newspaper Articles that Mention BAS Arguments: This second section captures some of the arguments presented in the media as evidence that the media were interested in the controversy and careful to explain information presented to them.

3. Memorable Language and Stories: This third section reveals some of the metaphors used to explain how the reservoir would impact the community. It also unravels the misunderstanding of the Barrens name and why it may have been targeted in the first place. Finally, this section examines why the Amalga Barrens was called a dam when it was really proposed to be an off-stream reservoir constructed with earthen dikes ranging in height from 40 to 70 feet.

In sum, the first part shows that Bridgerland Audubon Society (BAS) did indeed craft persuasive arguments that stayed intact throughout the 1990s. One thing did evolve: the enhancement of these arguments over time as information changed or became better understood. Likewise, these arguments were communicated in various ways to various audiences, and the second part highlights a few newspaper articles that show that the arguments remained intact. Finally, the third part identifies memorable language and
stories that pervaded the communication materials and that helped the community understand the complex issues in ways that made sense to them.

**Evolution of BAS Arguments from 1989 to 1998**

BAS began crafting its arguments as early as 1989 before the 1991 Bear River Development Act was passed, officially identifying the Amalga Barrens as a proposed site. BAS’s persuasive arguments (based on logos and pathos) stayed intact throughout the 1990s. However, one thing did evolve: the enhancement of these arguments over time as information changed or became better understood and as more studies were conducted by scientific and engineering experts at both the Utah Division of Water Resources and Utah State University. In 1989, the Cache Valley Environmental Coalition formed, representing many organizations, including BAS. The Bear River was being discussed as the next watering hole for development, but the Amalga Barrens was not yet identified as a proposed site. At this time, the coalition framed the arguments as recommendations for decision-making in a presentation titled “Environmental Concerns Regarding Development of the Bear River and Its Tributaries” given to the Bear River Task Force.

“We have found that the financial and environmental costs required for the interbasin transfer of the Bear River are so great that we recommend that the task force should: (1) Consider environmental damage as a major cost on a par with financial considerations in recommending projects; (2) Seek the lowest cost alternatives first; (3) Explore political solutions to prevent hoarding of water; and (4) Recommend that conservation play an increased role in water planning before new sources are developed” (p. 4).
Two recommendations are particularly noteworthy. The first is the recommendation to consider environmental damage as a cost, and the second is the recommendation to promote conservation, not development, as a solution to Utah’s water problem. Both these recommendations made their way through the first and second efforts and became significant arguments against the dam proposal. (See Chapter IV.) At this point in the controversy, though, it is apparent that the environmental community recognized “cost” as a significant issue for decision-makers (the legislators) and placed it number one on their list of recommendations, and they also reframed the term to mean more than just the cost of constructing a dam. It argued that there was a cost to mitigating environmental damage, and this cost was just as important as the cost of construction (an application of Aristotle’s logos).

Including the environment as a cost was important because it would later take on a new layer of meaning in 1990 when the Amalga Barrens was being studied as a site, and it continued to the end of the controversy. A. Lindahl, BAS conservation chair, introduced two new costs associated with the dam proposal: the cost of losing the bird habitat at the Barrens and the cost of losing quality of life in the Cache Valley (an application of Aristotle’s pathos). In a document titled “Defending the Barrens,” A. Lindahl (1990) made a list of concerns, including “Wildlife loss: Fifty species of birds nest and/or feed at the Barrens, especially good habitat for shorebirds. Farmland loss: A large fraction of the Barrens is productive cropland and pasture and is essential to the function of many farms and dairies. Duck Club: A private duck has built in the middle of the Barrens that are attractive to all wetlands species.” For the first time, cost was more than a concrete dollar figure; it was now an abstract concept that was more difficult for
decision-makers to understand, but the environmental community and Cache Valley residents understood it perfectly. Thus, the layers of meaning associated with cost entered the BAS argument strategy early on and stayed there until the end of the controversy. Both the concrete cost argument and the abstract cost argument had a place in BAS’s communication strategy, and both were used depending on the audience. BAS positioned the concrete cost argument with legislators, public officials, and scientific experts and positioned the abstract cost argument with the environmental community and residents of Cache Valley in an effort to convince these audiences that the dam proposal was a bad idea (an application of combining Aristotle’s ethos, logos, and pathos to be more persuasive).

In 1990 and 1991, it is clear that additional information was added to the Barrens argument as it became available. In a fact sheet and letter templates addressed to senators and representatives that he prepared as a lobbyist for the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, lobbyist W. Martinson’s talked about “poor water quality” due to “higher salinity” levels at the Barrens and “minimal recreation potential” due to the reservoir’s shallowness (“Fact Sheets on the Four 1991 Legislative Issues,” 1991; “Dear Senator,” 1991; “Dear Representative, 1991). He also mentioned that “getting a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency [to flood the wetland] will be difficult” (“Dear Senator,” 1991; “Dear Representative,” 1991). Interestingly, the permit issue was never mentioned during the second effort. The arguments about recreational value and poor water quality were mentioned from time to time, but they did not become part of the main argument strategy, which focused on four things: economic and environmental cost, loss of bird habitat on a unique wetland, quality of life impacts to the community, and water
conservation (Dixon, 1997; Dixon, 1998). It is unclear why some arguments took ground and others did not. It is likely due to audience values. Aristotle advocated using all the available means of persuasion (all the arguments to persuade an audience), and the EPA permitting process appears to have been insignificant perhaps because it was unnecessary to get a permit if the proposal was never accepted. There were more convincing arguments getting at the heart of the matter, which was to kill the proposal.

Sample Newspaper Articles that Mention BAS Arguments

As mentioned in Chapter IV, BAS’s strategy to get the media involved in the controversy was important. It is true that water development of the Bear River and the Amalga Barrens proposal would have received coverage anyway because they were so controversial. This section, however, underscores the point that the media not only covered the issue but also articulated BAS’s arguments as BAS had presented them to the media. There are several examples that span the controversy in both Cache Valley and Wasatch Front newspapers. First, *Herald Journal* reporter J. Wise wrote the following after interviewing A. Lindahl in 1990 for an article titled “Battle at the Barrens”:

“Alice Lindahl, who along with others who are spearheading local opposition to damming the Barrens, claim the area’s wetland and wildlife values far outweigh its uses for storing water. ‘The Barrens represents a unique area in Utah. The shallow ponds, extensive marshes, salt flats, pastures, fallow fields, agricultural croplands, ditches, canals and the waters of Clay Slough produce a variety of … habitats which provide prime nesting, resting, and feeding areas for well over 100 species of birds,’ Lindahl said. Lindahl and others oppose the construction of the
Barrens dam ‘because it would result in the loss of valuable wildlife, agricultural and recreational resources that will not be offset by the advantages and costs of the impounded water. This area will become even more valuable in the future as greater numbers of Utahns and tourists seek out natural areas in the West to view wildlife and the number of such areas declines,’ Lindahl said” (p. 11).

Second, in a 1997 Salt Lake Tribune article titled “Bear River Dam Proposal Worries Northern Utahns,” reporter J. Loftin wrote, “Bryan Dixon, president of the Bridgerland Audubon Society, expressed concern that a reservoir submerging the Barrens would ruin prime habitat for more than 100 species of birds” (p. C3). Third, the Deseret News published an Associated Press article titled “Public Pans Plan to Put Dam at Cache Site” in 1997, saying, “Conservationists worry the dam would destroy habitat for dozens of species of birds and other wildlife” (p. B7). Fourth, Herald Journal reporter N. Farrell published a five-part series in August 1999 about the Amalga Barrens, writing, “Opponents call proposed Bear River dams environmentally destructive projects that would devastate hard-working folks’ land and homes” (1999a, p. 1) and “…Some Cache Valley residents say a unique saline wetland in Amalga would be destroyed if a dam is built on top of it” (1999b, p. 8).

The fact that BAS’s argument remained intact in the media, as the examples above show, is noteworthy because some media outlets are not always thorough in their coverage of controversial issues, sometimes misquoting sources or mixing up the facts. BAS appears to have been successful at two things: clearly articulating their arguments to media representatives and staying consistent with their arguments. The four main arguments presented in the first section of this chapter never changed. BAS may have
reordered the arguments, articulating the most convincing one for the audience at hand, but BAS never wavered from its arguments. Repetition of its arguments in the newspaper, at hearings, at public meetings, and in documents—such as letters, fact sheets, and newsletters—helped a variety of audiences understand the issue and kept the conversation going until the very end. The Amalga Barrens had presence just about everywhere in the community; it was on the people’s mind for a long time.

Memorable Language and Stories

Language the people used and the stories people told are an interesting part of this analysis. Language and stories helped create an emotional connection to a very scientific, political, and economic issue. They also helped both the community and the decision-makers in the legislature understand abstract ideologies in concrete terms they could understand and with which they could identify. This section presents four examples of how language and stories affected a range of audiences during the Barrens wetlands controversy.

Sunset Metaphor

As mentioned in this chapter and in Chapter IV, BAS stressed the use of scientific and economic data to make decisions, to take a position, and to frame its arguments. It was also very good at helping the community visualize the data in ways that made sense to them. One such visualization was a story told about the sunset. B. Dixon, BAS president, said during my interview with him that when trying to communicate with the community, “the most brilliant strategy” came from A. Lindahl when she drove home the emotional aspect of the dam. “You know this dam is going to be 60 to70 feet tall. You
see those telephone poles? That’s taller than the poles behind your house.’ With that, all of sudden, people could start to imagine what this dam was actually going to be like and how it would impact their ability to see the sun setting each night. The ability to communicate with people in terms they related to was very powerful” (personal communication, April 12, 2012). (See Figure 18.)

B. Dixon called the “sunset” story a “brilliant strategy” because it helped people visualize in their mind’s eye how large and tall the dam would be and how it would impact them personally. The people could relate to it because they valued the beautiful Cache Valley sunsets and could see the telephones poles from where they were sitting when this visualization strategy was used during the first public meeting BAS sponsored. Did this “brilliant strategy” affect the outcome? There is no evidence that it did. The most convincing argument was cost, not aesthetics. However, it may have been a significant factor in “rallying the troops.” The metaphor could have been a way for the community to connect emotionally with the Amalga Barrens, which could have then motivated community members to voice their concerns to D. Strong of the Division of Water Resources and Representative E. Anderson, a legislator (an application of Aristotle’s pathos). As mentioned in Chapter III, D. Strong and E. Anderson were people of influence (high ethos). They recommended to the legislature—the final decision-making body—that the Amalga Barrens proposal was bad public policy. They came to that conclusion because of what they learned from informed and trustworthy environmental advocates and from engaged community members (high ethos).
In addition to the sunset metaphor, which was a positive tactic, BAS had to manage a common but selfish attitude in environmentalism that made its way to the Amalga Barrens. Generally speaking, many communities state the “not in my backyard” arguments, saying that a development project (for example, a utility, waste disposal site, incinerator, airport) will negatively impact them if it is located too close to them. This argument implies that a project can move forward in some other community’s backyard as long as it is not in theirs. It can be a distraction to an environmental group’s overall goal of killing a bad proposal. BAS did not want the Bear River development in any community and certainly not in the Amalga Barrens, but this attitude was never made a
part of its communication strategy. The evidence appears to support the fact that the media perpetuated the attitude in its coverage of the Barrens, and Amalga town mayor and possibly other Amalga residents used the “not in my backyard” argument (Brunson, 1998; Farrell, 1999; Wise, 1997b; D. Wood, personal communication, April 18, 2012). The impact of this argument is unknown. It appears, though, that the argument received minimal coverage and what coverage it did receive was attributed to the Amalga mayor and “special interest groups.” BAS was never specifically mentioned. Thus, it appears that BAS was able to distance itself from this negative, selfish attitude and to let the Amalga residents pick up and carry this argument on their own.

“The Barrens”

Another language issue during the controversy regarded the Barrens name. The meaning of the “Barrens” was largely misunderstood by people unfamiliar with the area like D. Strong. During my interview with him, D. Strong indicated that the name “Barrens” led him to believe that the area was in fact barren. After speaking with people, he found out that either people agreed that there was nothing out there or people found it to be a special area (personal communication, April 18, 2012). This misunderstanding may have been an obstacle for the opposition, but B. Dixon made an effort to explain why the Barrens was called the Barrens. In a 1997 Salt Lake Tribune article titled “Bear River Dam Proposal Worries Northern Utahns,” J. Loftin wrote, “[Dixon] said the Barrens is so named because its high-alkaline soil and shallow groundwater limit agriculture” (p. C3). Explaining the Barrens name was something B. Dixon probably did often as part of the “educating the public” tactic discussed in Chapter IV.
It is unknown how the name “Barrens” name impacted the outcome of BAS’s efforts. It is possible that the Amalga Barrens was proposed in the first place because the Division of Water Resources officials concluded that area was so named because it was indeed barren—unproductive and unattractive. While BAS was very good at explaining the value of the wetland as a bird habitat, it did not explain how the Barrens got its name until 1997. It is possible that this oversight may have been a contributing factor to the failure in 1991, and it may have helped BAS succeed in the late 1990s. The fact is that BAS ultimately recognized the potential the word had for creating confusion and misunderstanding and took steps to explain it. D. Strong did eventually understand that the Barrens was not barren, and that understanding, along with many others discussed in this dissertation, may have influenced his decision to recommend the removal of the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a possible dam site.

“Dam” v. “Reservoir”

Finally, the words “dam” and “reservoir” are evidence of the power of word choice. The sources used for this study indicate that the word “dam” and the word “reservoir” were used interchangeably by everyone—BAS members, media representatives, public officials, and community groups. However, although Honeyville was slated to be a dam, and the Amalga Barrens was proposed to be an off-stream water storage facility—a reservoir, this distinction was rarely made in the documents, news articles, and interview transcriptions I analyzed.

There are three possible reasons why the words “dam” and “reservoir” were used interchangeably. The first reason may be because Honeyville and the Amalga Barrens were often mentioned together, and it was easier and simpler to call them both a dam.
The newspaper articles by reporters J. Woolf and J. Wise indicate that there was an initial effort to identify the Barrens as a reservoir, but the language eventually became muddled through simplicity (Wise, 1990; Woolf, 1990). J. Woolf’s 1990 article was the first to identify Honeyville and the Amalga Barrens as “dam” sites. In the article, Republican Senator F. Finlinson from Salt Lake City, who was a proponent of developing the Bear River, kept referring to “damming the Bear River” (as quoted by Woolf). In the same year, J. Wise wrote his article for the Herald Journal explaining the difference between a dam and the Barrens reservoir. “Not really a dam in a way many perceive one—that of a single dike or dam stretched across a narrow point on a river—the Barrens reservoir would impound water within roughly 12 miles of earthen dikes. It would create a two-and-a-half miles by three-miles, mostly rectangular, shallow pond” (p. 11). After 1990, there appears to be no evidence of any attempts to distinguish the Barrens as a reservoir, although it was called a reservoir—and a dam.

A second reason may be because a dam traditionally makes a reservoir; thus, the two seem tied together. A third reason may be the negative meaning behind the word “dam” and the positive meaning behind “reservoir.” Rhetorically, “dam” is a frightening word and has acquired negatives connotations. In addition, it is a hard, heavy word and conjures up images of a massive manmade concrete structure that becomes a blight to the natural environment that surrounds it. On the other hand, a reservoir is a place for water skiing, swimming, and picnicking—a place for fun with family and friends. BAS may have used the word “dam,” even though it was the incorrect word, because it was rhetorically effective. The word helped BAS reinforce its message that the Amalga Barrens was not the right place for Bear River water development and that there was
nothing “fun” about having a shallow off-stream water storage facility (too shallow to recreate in) in the community. BAS capitalized on the frightening nature of the word “dam” to perhaps “scare” people away from supporting the dam proposal.

Three Important Conclusions

From this analysis, I can make three important conclusions. First, metaphors may help people with no technical expertise understand complex scientific and economic data. Their use can provide a way for lay citizens to visualize numbers and concepts that may be difficult to understand or are unfamiliar. Additionally, metaphors can personalize issues being debated in the community and help citizens emotionally connect the issues with their own values and beliefs. These values and beliefs motivate people to behave in a certain way, especially if they feel empowered (Geller, 1995; Stern, 2000). In the case of the Barrens, the emotional connection and the belief that they could make difference helped motivate citizens to engage in conversations and intervene on the Barrens behalf regardless of the odds they faced.

Second, both concrete and abstract arguments have value with audiences, but a concrete argument may be more persuasive with decision-makers. The environmental community may relate to abstract arguments about environmental damage and loss. They have already made an emotional connection to the environment and do not need to be convinced with hard numbers that the environment may be harmed through development. They have seen it happen; they have already experienced it. On the other hand, decision-makers driven by economics prefer cost estimates and cost-benefit analyses. They prefer to operate in a world full of concrete numbers and statistics that can be analyzed and
manipulated. Abstract ideologies may frustrate them, and once frustrated they are likely to stop listening. Thus, environmental groups would do well to understand what decision-makers value and develop concrete arguments that support those values.

Third, environmental groups must be strategic and position the right arguments with the right audiences. They must understand their sphere of influence and critically analyze where their words can do the most good. They must know when to speak up and when to back off. This type of language development, analysis, and monitoring is time consuming, but it is part of being a strategic communicator, and it is part of achieving a mission-critical organizational goal.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATORS

This chapter concludes my dissertation by discussing the five fundamental communication strategies that appear to have made a difference for BAS and may make a difference for other environmental groups, the lessons the key players learned from living and working the controversy, the change in water development after 2002, the Barrens Sanctuary that protects the wetlands today, and the implications for professional communicators, including ideas for future research.

Communication Strategies

The overarching question driving this research is as follows: Against the odds, how did BAS influence a change in public policy regarding the Amalga Barrens wetlands dam proposal when similar groups dealing with similar issues have failed or met with mixed results? The three analyses discussed in Chapters III-V paint a clear picture of how BAS overcame the odds and succeeded in being a “David” that beat “Goliath.” So, what can we learn from this success story? There are five communication strategies that stand out as appearing to have made a difference. These strategies may be helpful to other community-based environmental advocacy groups managing similar controversies. However, it is important to remember two important points. First, the path to success for BAS may not be the same path to success for another group. Second, there are no guarantees these communication strategies will work every time or at all. After all, rhetoric, which must be accommodated to meet the needs of differing audiences and situations, is at play. Nevertheless, these communication strategies may be worth
considering, and they may be universal enough to apply to a variety of environmental situations all over the United States. Even so, how can environmental groups judge whether these strategies may work for them? Environmental controversies, undoubtedly, share a few things in common. For example, they are grounded in politics and economics, they require communication, and they need a strategic leader. Therefore, factors that may help groups judge the individual usefulness of this research may be similar rhetorical situations, audiences, political and economic climates, environmental views, and a state’s resource development priorities. Generally speaking, a similar context in which the controversy resides may be the best indicator of usefulness. Thus, with these common threads running through environmental movements, I have selected the communication strategies that seem to be the most applicable to the issues at play now and in the future, given the history of environmentalism in America.

**Be Civil in Word and Deed**

The Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy teaches that civility goes a long way in building credibility, and credibility builds trust. Trustworthy people are heard. When trustworthy individuals collaborate to learn and inform, then good environmental decisions are made through cooperation. This outcome supports S. Senecah’s (2004) Trinity of Voice theory, which says that the key to effective environmental decision-making “is an ongoing relationship of trust building to enhance community cohesiveness and capacity” (p. 20). BAS established civility as a guiding principle early on, and civility became the “way of doing business” when people talked about the issue among themselves, at meetings, in public hearings, and in the media. As a result, BAS
established an effective ethos (one of Aristotle’s persuasive appeals) with its audiences, which in part helped BAS influence public policy.

Civility is a mark of respect, and it is practiced when all points of view are welcomed and heard and when information is communicated calmly and articulately. Generally speaking, civility is missing from American society today, as is evident in political campaigns. It can also be seen during environmental protests when protesters scream, defy the law, and disregard opposing viewpoints. Making others angry creates a greater sphere of contention where little is resolved. The result may be deadlock negotiations that have no other choice but to be worked out in a court of law. As a community concerned with protecting the environment, environmental groups and citizens may accomplish more by being civil and enduring to the end with patience. BAS proved that civility worked.

**Target Specific Individuals with Influence**

The first attempt to delist the Barrens in 1991 failed in part because the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah tasked a lobbyist to target the legislature as a whole body, thus casting too wide a net. This outcome supports L. Bitzer’s argument that rhetoric is most effective when it matches the rhetorical situation in which it operates. The first attempt, therefore, was a rhetorical mismatch. The lobbyist did not react to the rhetorical situation with the appropriate rhetoric. The message did not stick because it did not have any glue. Even though important groundwork was laid, the ineffective rhetorical act of casting a wide net yielded very little in terms of convincing the legislature that the Amalga Barrens was not a good site for a reservoir.
By contrast, the second effort in the late 1990s under BAS’s leadership showed that bringing the conversation down to the local level and targeting specific individuals with influence in the legislature were crucial rhetorical acts. Figure 19 shows how communication flowed from BAS and the community to specific influential individuals: D. Strong, deputy director of the Utah Division of Water Resources, and Representative E. Anderson, a legislator representing the citizens of northern Utah. D. Strong and E. Anderson were invited to participate in the collaborative learning process advocated by S. Daniels and G. Walker. They spent time talking to citizens in their own communities, learned about their concerns, and understood that costs were too high, the environment was special and irreplaceable, and the community was not willing to sacrifice their quality of life when conservation was a better solution. They then took these concerns and arguments back to their colleagues in the legislature, who paid attention because they trusted D. Strong and E. Anderson and ultimately agreed that the Amalga Barrens site should be removed from consideration. Thus, when the rhetorical situation changed in the 1990s, BAS reacted by using advocates—insiders—to communicate indirectly with legislators. To use a lobbyist—an outsider—again would have been as rhetorically ineffective as the first time. It was better to target (cast a narrow net) specific individuals who had influence with decision-makers because these individuals were closer to the target audience. Thus, it may be necessary for environmental groups to rethink the value of lobbying. Lobbying may be seem like the thing to do because it has been going on for so long, and lobbying may have its place in a communication strategy, but it may also be rhetorically ineffective. Analyzing the rhetorical situation, as argued by L. Bitzer, may
help environmental groups work more effectively. As BAS showed, community-level opposition may be a better alternative to lobbying.

![Communication Flow to Decision-Makers](image)

*Figure 19.* A diagram that shows communication flowing from the local community and BAS to influential officials D. Strong and E. Anderson to the legislature.

**Focus on Cost with Decision-Makers**

In BAS’s eyes, the Amalga Barrens proposal was always an environmental issue. Its mission as a conservation organization was to protect the bird habitat on the wetland. However, BAS recognized that in Utah’s pro-economic development political climate, it needed to craft an economic message. The environmental message alone may have certainly been ignored by decision-makers (legislators) who had a fiduciary responsibility
to spend taxpayer money wisely. Thus, BAS found a way to connect their values to the decision-makers’ values (Aristotle’s pathos) by arguing the high environmental costs of mitigating the wetland. The construction costs were already available from the Utah Division of Water Resources and the engineering firms it hired to study the feasibility of the Amalga Barrens site. BAS built on that argument by shining a light on the mitigation costs revealed in the same engineering feasibility studies and official government records (Aristotle’s logos). Many key players in the controversy (including BAS president B. Dixon) disclosed that the economic argument that included both the cost of construction and the cost of mitigation won over the legislature. Therefore, the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy shows that economics may trump the environment, unless the environment can be cast in economic terms. The more concrete the argument, the more palatable it is for decision-makers, who may be unmoved by abstract environmental ideologies. At the end of the day, BAS achieved its goal of protecting the Barrens, but it did so in a way that made sense to the legislators tasked with deciding the wetland’s fate, not necessarily to environmentalists. The takeaway message for environmental groups is that environmental issues can always be connected to costs, so this strategy may be increasingly important when cost messages seem more prevalent than environmental messages.

**Create a Portfolio of Arguments Grounded in Data**

BAS diversified its portfolio of arguments to match the values, beliefs, and attitudes of its various audiences and to match the rhetorical situations in which its various audiences were operating. This strategy matches Aristotle’s appeal to pathos and L. Bitzer’s argument that situations are rhetorical. BAS’s arguments focused on four
critical points: the cost of constructing the reservoir and mitigating the wetland loss, the loss of or damage to the special and irreplaceable bird habitat, the loss of productive farmland to Amalga residents and the loss of quality of life to Cache Valley residents, and the need for conservation. Three of the four arguments were grounded in scientific and economic data coming from technical experts, and they were difficult to ignore or to counterargue. The facts were concrete, tangible, and palatable for a range of audiences. In contrast, the argument about loss of quality of life was abstract and difficult to quantify, and it was problematic in terms of not being an across-the-board compelling argument. Some gain it (e.g., Wasatch Front residents getting the water they need) while others lose it (e.g., Amalga town residents living next to a large and unsightly off-stream storage facility). As such, arguments that are most compelling to some stakeholders may be least compelling to ultimate decision-makers. Because “quality of life” meant different things to different people, the argument was slippery, never hitting the target right on. BAS recognized the abstract and problematic nature of this argument and grounded it for the local audience by using the sunset metaphor during a town meeting. By comparing the reservoir dikes to the existing 70-foot telephone poles, BAS helped residents to visualize earthen dikes and imagine never seeing the sunset again. The community residents were thus convinced that their quality of life would indeed be lost. BAS combined logos with pathos and ethos, resulting in hitting its mark with an emotionally powerful and memorable metaphor. The abstract had become concrete. Concrete arguments may be more palatable for audiences, and abstract arguments can become more concrete through the use of compelling metaphors—those that carry the most weight with the audience.
Thus, abstract arguments may benefit from being reframed in terms people can understand, and compelling visualization is one way to do that.

Another important point about creating a portfolio of arguments is that appropriate arguments can be selected from the portfolio to match the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the audience being targeted. This strategy is another good use of Aristotle’s pathos. BAS was highly strategic with its arguments and audiences, targeting the legislature and public officials with economic and conservation arguments, the community with loss of farmland and quality of life arguments, and environmentalists with loss of bird habitat arguments. While the economic argument won at the end of the day, the other arguments in the portfolio had a place in the conversation. They helped the community come together as a unified voice that spoke intelligently about the Barrens proposal to influential individuals closer to the target audience (D. Strong and E. Anderson). When compounded with the economic argument (logos), these other arguments created an opposition that was too hard for decision-makers to ignore. The arguments in the portfolio worked harmoniously to achieve the desire outcome—the change in public policy to remove the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a Bear River dam site. Thus, it is important for environmental groups to understand the value of diversifying not only the arguments themselves but also the types of arguments. Not all environmental arguments need to be based in pathos, and not all economic arguments need to be based in logos. It is the blend of pathos and logos that appears to work well. Just like diversifying investments in the financial world, diversifying the argument in the environmental world may help a group to reach its goals. The keys are to diversify the number of arguments and the order in which they are presented to audiences while still
remaining consistent and coherent, and to look for ways to turn pathos arguments into logos arguments and vice versa to create a blend of compelling arguments for diverse audiences. Both pathos and logos arguments matter in a communication strategy.

**Educate the Community**

B. Dixon recognized early on that education was critical to their success (personal communication, April 12, 2012). During the first effort in the early 1990s, BAS joined forces with other Utah Audubon chapters to create the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, and left it up to the council’s lobbyist to do the educating for it. From W. Martinson’s account, there is no doubt that lobbying helped disperse information and make BAS’s opposition known; however, it did not succeed at convincing that legislature that the Barrens was an unacceptable site for Bear River development (personal communication, April 19, 2012). That outcome materialized in the late 1990s once BAS led its own education efforts at the local level. BAS held town meetings where all points of view were welcomed and heard. This practice supports S. Daniels and G. Walker’s (2001) collaborative learning theory, which says, in part, that “the learning process must be able to accommodate value differences” (p. xiii). BAS also made sure that knowledgeable (scientific experts) and influential people (legislators and government officials) served on the panels so that residents could get credible information. This practice likewise plays into the “fundamental paradox” of the collaborative learning process, which works on the premise that public policy makes progress through the process of involving an informed citizenry in the crafting of technically competent decisions (p. xiii). Furthermore, the learning process during the town meetings was a two-
way endeavor. The influential people in attendance also learned about the community’s concerns and were instrumental in delivering that message to decision-makers.

Thus, civil, social interactions created environments where collaborative learning could take place. BAS also engaged community members and influential people in conversations in the media and at public hearings where the Amalga Barrens was being discussed and debated. S. Daniels and G. Walker (2001) argued that “good decisions are characterized by the amount and nature of learning that both precedes and follows them” (p. xiii). BAS helped me see, as the researcher, much of the learning that took place before a good decision was made. To this end, all these opportunities to educate people made the Barrens present in so many public spheres. This vast awareness helped facilitate the decision-making and policy-changing processes the legislature went through to delist the Barrens. Education and increased awareness may be able to do likewise for other environmental groups.

Lessons Learned from the Amalga Barrens Controversy

Looking back, B. Dixon said he had no regrets about how BAS communicated during the Amalga Barrens controversy, except he wished that BAS had held more town meetings and that he had testified during the 2002 legislative session when the Bear River Development Act was being amended to exclude the Barrens from development (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Clearly, educating the public was important to him, and more meetings certainly may have facilitated more learning, but what BAS did was apparently enough. It also appears that his lack of testimony did not hinder the decision-making and policy-changing processes in any way. Based on recommendations
from D. Strong and E. Anderson, the legislature moved forward to delist the Barrens—the decision had already been made.

On the other hand, L. Anhder of the Cache County Council and Cache County Water Policy Board would definitely have done things differently. For example, he would have been out front more publically, and he would have been in contact with legislators like Representative E. Anderson. “I would have fought tooth and toenail,” L. Anhder said. “I would have at least countered the argument that there was not any support for the dam with Representative E. Anderson, because there was quite a bit of support” (personal communication, April 20, 2012). He also said that he would have attempted a resolution with the county council to go on the record in support of water development. “We should have made it a public issue and helped [county citizens] understand,” he said. “People needed to see how they would be hurting if they did not have water, and they just could not see it” (personal communication, April 20, 2012).

Even though his lobbying efforts were not successful during the first attempt, W. Martinson of the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah still believes that locals are better off when they contact their legislators (personal communication, April 19, 2012). The second effort certainly supports this view, because locals did contact the specific legislators representing them—one of them being Representative E. Anderson, who drafted a bill and garnered legislative support to amend the Bear River Development Act to exclude the Amalga Barrens from consideration as a dam site. W. Martinson still prefers phone calls over emails and says that mailed letters, less popular today than in the 1990s, grab the attention of legislators—even form letters—but he acknowledges that personal letters are better than form letters. “If a legislator received 1,000 form letters and
only one personal letter, then that is still making a statement’ (personal communication, April 19, 2012).

Finally, D. Strong said that the public has changed since the 1990s Amalga Barrens controversy, because they believed in experts back then, but now they are more skeptical. “The public does not believe in experts anymore and are guilty of thinking that they know more than they really do” (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012). He said that more organizations are using the media and the Internet more, and people seem to think that everything they read is true. “We have information, and depending on the accuracy of the information, we [as a public] are either more informed or less informed” (D. Strong, personal communication, April 18, 2012). What does this viewpoint mean for the communication strategies presented in this chapter? Information from credible sources must take precedence, and, unfortunately, questionable sources pervade the Internet, and many people do not check the ethos of those sources. Environmental groups with high ethos can counter skepticism by providing information to the public that is accurate and trustworthy and that comes from credible sources.

**Bear River Water Development Today**

The Bear River is still not developed today, although the desire to develop it is in the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District’s plan to use it as a future water source for the Salt Lake Valley. Some pressure, however, is off the current debate because enough water from the Central Utah Project is now coming north into the Wasatch Front instead of going strictly south to central and southern Utah. Water users are also conserving more water, so the demand for water for the Wasatch Front has diminished. On the other hand,
L. Hillyard, a Republican senator representing Cache Valley does not think the Barrens is safe from development, even though the Bear River Development Act was amended in 2002 to exclude the Barrens from development (personal communication, April 12, 2012). Hillyard said, “It only takes 10 minutes to amend a bill and suddenly the Barrens is back on the table again.” D. Strong believes differently. “I personally believe that the [environmental] sensitivity of the Barrens site will not change, so the Barrens will probably never come back as a good option,” D. Strong said. “The people said loud and clear: ‘Stay away from the Barrens’” (personal communication, April 18, 2012). If the Barrens area does come back, Amalga Mayor D. Wood said his town is ready for another fight. “Amalga is well connected now with the Internet and other forms of communication to get the word out. If I told one person that the dam was being reconsidered, the whole town would know in under a week” (personal communication, April 18, 2012).

The Amalga Barrens Wetlands Today

To protect the Amalga Barrens from ever being reconsidered for development, BAS purchased, in 2001, 156.4 acres of mudflats, marshes, and grasslands, including approximately one mile of riparian habitat, and designated the area as a protected sanctuary for shorebirds and waterfowl. The property will be held in perpetuity by BAS as a bird sanctuary (Bridgerland Audubon Society, n.d.). Figure 20 shows what the Barrens area looks like today. Part of the attraction for birds in the absence of humans (except for an occasional bird watcher). In the 1990s, BAS wanted the Barrens to remain as it was, and it got its wish.
The main implication for the field of professional communication is that strategic organizational communication works, and researchers and instructors in the field must emphasize and demonstrate a strategic mindset in their research and in their pedagogy. Students, who later become professionals, must learn how to be strategic with their planning and with their communication. The Amalga Barrens controversy can be an excellent case study to discuss and study in the classroom, in organizations where professional communicators work, and in the communities across the United States. As a pilot case study, my dissertation about the Amalga Barrens opens an agenda for researchers to follow as they find their own case studies to analyze. To be sure, there is

*Figure 20.* The Amalga Barrens Sanctuary protects the wetlands and bird habitat today. Photo courtesy of the Bridgerland Audubon Society.
no shortage of issues for communities to rally behind, no shortage of opportunities for organizations to practice strategic communication, and no shortage of case studies to research.

The research agenda opened by my dissertation revolves around the need for more case study research in order to determine if the communication strategies and tactics presented in my study are pervasive and common enough to be formulated into a definitive communication framework for use by a wide-range of environmental groups. As more analyses are conducted, researchers can compare their findings to detect any patterns among them, and those patterns can then be used to create a communication framework for effective environmental advocacy.

More research is also needed in other areas that potentially affect an environmental controversy, and this additional research could be applied specifically to the Amalga Barrens or to any general environmental issue. For example, my dissertation focuses primarily on general rhetoric, but there is certainly more work to be done in visual rhetoric. All sorts of visuals can be analyzed for their effectiveness at communicating an environmental message. Visual examples include cartoons, advertisements, maps, renderings, and photos. Furthermore, my dissertation analyzes BAS’s perspective and communication strategy, but an analysis from the community’s perspective could be very fruitful. This research angle could include analysis of letters to the editor, testimonials given at public hearings, comments submitted as part of a public comment period, and citizen interviews. From such an analysis, researchers can learn more about what motivates a community to communicate and how they do it.
Another area that needs attention is social media. During the Amalga Barrens controversy, social media did not exist. However, social media is a significant part of today’s American lifestyle, and it must be considered a part of any communication strategy. Unfortunately, the Barrens case study cannot shed light on how social media worked as a strategy, so more current case studies must be analyzed to gain an understanding of social media’s role in a controversy. I should also note that lack of a social media presence during the Amalga Barrens controversy does not negate the communication strategies and tactics presented in this dissertation. Many of the strategies and tactics BAS developed can be deployed in face-to-face meetings, in the newspaper, and on a social media site.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
<table>
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<th>Title of Document</th>
<th>Genre / Author / Audience</th>
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<td>“Environmental Concerns Regarding Development of the Bear</td>
<td>Position Statement to the Bear River Task Force by the Cache Environmental Coalition</td>
<td>October 2, 1989</td>
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<td>River and Its Tributaries”</td>
<td>(Bridgerland Audubon member of coalition)</td>
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<td>Meeting”</td>
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<td>“Defending the Barrens”</td>
<td>Position Statement and Fact Sheet Prepared by the Bridgerland Audubon Society. Audience</td>
<td>~1990</td>
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<td>Audience Unknown.</td>
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<td>“Wetlands Loss, Barrens Dam”</td>
<td>Fact Sheet from the Bridgerland Audubon Society. Audience Unknown.</td>
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<td>“Dear Audubon Lobbying Network Participants”</td>
<td>Letter from Lobbyist Hired by the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah to Members of the</td>
<td>December 29, 1990</td>
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<td>“Fact Sheets on the Four 1991 Legislative Issues”</td>
<td>Bear River Water Development and Allocation Position, Justification, and Background Fact</td>
<td>~December 1990</td>
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<td>“Reasons to Oppose the Barrens”</td>
<td>A Slideshow Presentation Prepared by Alice Lindahl,</td>
<td>January 12, 1991</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>Dam”</td>
<td>Conservation Chair, Bridgerland Audubon Society. Audience Unknown.</td>
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<td>“Dear Senator”</td>
<td>Form Letter for Members of Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah to Send to Their Senator</td>
<td>January 31, 1991</td>
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<td>“Reasons the Barrens Should be Deleted for Development in SB 98: Detail and Documentation”</td>
<td>Written Comments Prepared by Lobbyist and Provided to the Legislature from the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah</td>
<td>January 31, 1991</td>
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<td>“The Barrens”</td>
<td>Script of Presentation by Dr. Larry Ryel to the Energy, Natural Resource and Agriculture Standing Committee</td>
<td>January 31, 1991</td>
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<td>“Update on the Four Issues Mailed in December”</td>
<td>Fact Sheet Prepared by Lobbyist to Members of the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah</td>
<td>February 5, 1991</td>
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<td>“Dear Representative”</td>
<td>Form Letter for Members of Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah to Send to Their Representative</td>
<td>February 14, 1991</td>
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<td>“Reasons the Barrens Should be Deleted for Development in SB 98: Detail and Documentation”</td>
<td>Updated Written Comments Prepared by Lobbyist and Provided to the Legislature from the Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah</td>
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“Removal of Barrens Damsite from Bear River Development”  Memo Prepared by Wayne Martinson, Lobbyist, Audubon Coordinating Council of Utah, to Alice Lindahl, Conservation Chair, Bridgerland Audubon Society  May 2, 1991
## APPENDIX B

Table 2  
**Amalga Barrens Documents During the Second Effort: 1997-1999**

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<th>Title of Document</th>
<th>Genre / Author / Audience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to Amalga Mayor Wood—Confirmation as Participant</td>
<td>Letter Prepared by Bryan Dixon, President, Bridgerland Audubon Society</td>
<td>December 1, 1997</td>
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<td>Letter from Larry Anhder</td>
<td>Letter to Bryan Dixon, President, Bridgerland Audubon Society, from Larry Anhder, Cache County Councilman and Chair of the</td>
<td>February 7, 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>Cache Water Policy Advisory Board, in Response to <em>The Stilt</em> newsletter article</td>
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<td>February 15, 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Friends of the Barrens”</td>
<td>Letter from Bryan Dixon, President, Bridgerland Audubon Society, to Mailing List Compiled at December 1997 Public Meeting</td>
<td>April 7, 1998</td>
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<td>Public Meeting Agenda</td>
<td>Agenda for Second Public Meeting Prepared by Bridgerland Audubon Society</td>
<td>January 14, 1999</td>
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<td>“Wetlands and Water Quality Issues at the Proposed Barrens Reservoir Site”</td>
<td>Presentation Script Prepared by Janis L. Boettenger, Department of Plants, Soils, and Biometeorology, Utah State University. Panelist at Second Public Meeting.</td>
<td>January 14, 1999</td>
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<td>“What’s New at the Barrens” Meeting</td>
<td>List of Questions for Panelists Prepared by Bridgerland Audubon Society</td>
<td>January 14, 1999</td>
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</table>
Public Meeting. Includes Background.

Letter

“Press Conference”
Talking points for Amalga Town Press Conference. Speaker Unknown (Could be Mayor Wood or resident Joe Maynard). April 12, 1999
### APPENDIX C

Table 3


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<tr>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
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<td>Fight Over Bear River Water Heats Up</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>December 15, 1988</td>
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<td>Legislature Faces Another Taxing Issue—Water</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>December 19, 1988</td>
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<td>4 in House Push Bear River Measure</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>January 26, 1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Unveils Its Own Water Proposal</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>April 20, 1989</td>
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<td>State Officials Tell Task Force Bear River Must be Developed</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>May 9, 1989</td>
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<td>Bear River Task Force Agrees on Development But Little Else</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>October 24, 1989</td>
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<td>$1.5 Million Sought for River Study</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>November 7, 1989</td>
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<td>Legislators Visit Possible Dam Sites on Bear River in Box Elder, Cache</td>
<td><em>Salt Lake Tribune</em></td>
<td>September 22, 1990</td>
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<td>Task Force Backs 3 Sites for Dams on Bear River</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>November 13, 1990</td>
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<td>Utah Lawmakers Seek Funds for 3 of 5 Bear River Dams</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
<td>November 25, 1990</td>
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<td>Interim Panel Orders Draft Bill to Advance Bear River Projects</td>
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<td>Utah’s Water Laws Inequitable</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
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<td>Battle at the Barrens</td>
<td><em>Herald Journal</em></td>
<td>December 2, 1990</td>
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<td>Hands Off</td>
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<td>Cache Water War Begins to Heat up</td>
<td><em>Deseret News</em></td>
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<td>Audubon Members Squawk at Funds for Dam Study</td>
<td>Salt Lake Tribune</td>
<td>February 1, 1991</td>
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<td>Senate Studies Bear River for Water-Storage Project</td>
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<td>Utah Senate Goes on a Spending Spree with Surplus Funds</td>
<td>Deseret News</td>
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<td>Amalga Barrens Dam Site Blasted</td>
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<td>Leavitt Tours Cache Dam Site</td>
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<td>A Bigger Barrens Envisioned</td>
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<td>Water Planner Hope for Reservoir on Bear River</td>
<td>Salt Lake Tribune</td>
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<td>Bear River Dam Proposal Worries Northern Utahns</td>
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<td>Public Pans Plan to Put a Dam at Cache Site</td>
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<td>Valley Losing on Water Issue?</td>
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<td>Barrens Dam a Done Deal?</td>
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<td>Study Discourages Building of Dam at Amalga Barrens</td>
<td>Salt Lake Tribune</td>
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<td>Bear River Battle Heats Up</td>
<td>Herald Journal</td>
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<td>Bear River Dams Opposed</td>
<td>Herald Journal</td>
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Residents of Cache and Box Elder Protest Funds Budgeted for Corridor

Salt Lake Tribune
June 17, 1999

‘Not Without A Fight’

Herald Journal
August 1, 1999

Worlds Apart: Proposed Dams’ Impact on Refuge Part of Debate

Herald Journal
August 2, 1999

How Do You Spell ‘Dam’?

Herald Journal
August 3, 1999

Groups Have Opposing Views on Dam Alternatives

Herald Journal
August 4, 1999

Official: Cache Has No Agenda to Build Dam

Herald Journal
August 5, 1999

Hyrum Dam Still on Agenda

Herald Journal
October 5, 2000

Water Hearing Sees Steam

Herald Journal
August 23, 2001

Bear River Dams No Longer Wanted

Herald Journal
September 2, 2001

Is Desertion of Dam Sites Too Good to be True?

Herald Journal
September 9, 2001

Legislator Wants 2 Dams Off List

Deseret News
November 23, 2001

Bill Would Prohibit Two Dams on Dear River

Salt Lake Tribune
January 11, 2002

Bear River Dam Hits House

Herald Journal
February 12, 2002

Controversial Dam Sites Removed from Roster

Deseret News
February 28, 2002

Measure Blocking 2 Dams Advances to Gov. Leavitt

Salt Lake Tribune
March 1, 2002

Hyrum Dam Now in Focus?

Herald Journal
March 8, 2002

Water Policy Debate Still Raging On

Herald Journal
March 22, 2002
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

*A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy*

**Communication Strategy**
- What was your communication strategy?
- Why did you decide on this communication strategy?
- How did you execute your communication strategy?
- What was the result of your communication strategy?
- What did you learn from the first and second efforts?
- What changes did you implement between the first and second efforts?
- What was the political climate like during the first and second efforts?
- How did you build credibility with your varied audiences?
- How did you build community support?
- How did you identify your varied audiences?
- How did you become a legitimate stakeholder?

**Arguments—Development**
- What arguments did you develop?
- Why did you decide on these arguments?
- How did you prioritize these arguments?
- Why did you prioritize these arguments in this way?
- How and where did you position your arguments?

**Arguments—Reception**
- Which arguments were the most persuasive? Least persuasive?
- Why were these arguments persuasive? Least persuasive?
- Which arguments did you hear most often? Least often?
- How did you receive these arguments? (e.g., What were you reading? What meeting were you attending?)
- From whom did these arguments come? Did this person have high or low credibility?

**Public Events**
- What do you remember about the public meetings?
- How many people were there?
- What was the tone?
- What happened? What was said?
APPENDIX E

Informed Consent

A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy

USU IRB Certified Exempt: 04/03/2012
Exempt Certification Expires: 04/02/2015
Protocol Number: 4384

Introduction/ Purpose Dr. Keith Gibson and student researcher Laura Vernon in the Department of English at Utah State University are conducting a research study to find out more about communication strategies during the Amalga Barrens wetlands controversy in the 1990s. You have been asked to take part because of your specialized knowledge and public involvement in the controversy. There will be approximately 12 total participants in this research.

Procedures If you agree to be in this research study, you will be asked to schedule and participate in an interview at a day, time, and location convenient for you. The interview will be conducted in person or over the phone and will be audiotaped. The interview will be no more than an hour. At your request, you may receive a copy of the interview questions ahead of time. If a follow-up interview is necessary, you will be contacted to schedule another in-person or phone interview at a day, time, and location convenient for you. A follow-up interview will take no more than an hour. You will be given an opportunity to review a copy of your interview transcript and notify the investigator and student researcher of any changes you would like to make within 10 days of receiving the draft transcript. With your permission, you will be identified in research records, research notes, and the final report by name, position, and affiliation. Identification of interviewees is important to the research for historical reasons.

Risks The risks associated with your participation in this research are no greater than what you may experience in everyday activities.

Confidentiality Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigator and student researcher will have access to the data, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet or on a password protected computer in a locked room. With your permission, a digital recorder will be used during the interview, and a transcript of the recording will be made. The recordings and transcripts will be destroyed no later than one year after the completion of the study.

Benefits A possible benefit is a better understanding of how environmental groups, government officials, and scientific experts communicate with each other, resolve disputes, and form better public policy. Another possible benefit is a better understanding of how to communicate strategically with varied audiences, manage communication flow,
develop persuasive arguments, and understand conflicting perspectives. Information gained from this study may have direct or indirect benefit to you now or in the future.

**Explanation & offer to answer questions**  Student researcher Laura Vernon has explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Dr. Keith Gibson at (435) 797-2737 or at keith.gibson@usu.edu.

**Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence**
Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence or loss of benefits. Please notify the principal investigator and student researcher of your decision to withdraw.

**IRB Approval Statement**  The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury and would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email irb@usu.edu to obtain information or to offer input.

**Investigator Statement**  “I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered.”

**Signatures of Researchers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keith Gibson</th>
<th>Laura Vernon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
<td>Student Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435.797.2737</td>
<td>435.755.5115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:keith.gibson@usu.edu">keith.gibson@usu.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:laura.vernon@usu.edu">laura.vernon@usu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Consent to Participate**
By signing below, I agree to participate in this research study and to have my name, position, and affiliation used in the reporting of results.

| Participant Signature | Date |

| Participant Name (Please Print) |  |
CURRICULUM VITAE

Laura Vernon

Education

- Doctorate in Theory & Practice of Professional Communication, Emphasis in Environmental Rhetoric, 2013, Utah State University, Logan, Utah
  Dissertation: A Rhetorical Analysis of Strategic Communication in the Amalga Barrens Wetlands Controversy, directed by Keith Grant-Davie


- Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, 1994, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

Academic Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Article

- “The Role of the Cognate Course in Graduate Professional Communication Programs” (Co-authored with Keith Gibson and David Christensen), Council for Programs in Technical & Scientific Communication’s Programmatic Perspectives, March 2010

Peer-Reviewed Article in Conference Proceeding


Handbook


Electronic Publication

- Hiring for Excellence Online Faculty Training (Co-authored with Kelli Cargile Cook), Utah State University, 2008

National Science Foundation Research Assistantships

- iUTAH (Water Sustainability) EPSCoR Research Assistant, NSF #1208732, Utah State University, September 2012-May 2013
- **ADVANCE (Gender Equity and Diversity) Research Assistant**, NSF #0244922, Utah State University, January 2007-December 2008

### Academic Conference Presentations

- “English in an Engineering Department: How to Navigate Interdisciplinary Teaching Practices and Outcomes” (Co-presented with Keith Gibson), Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, October 2010
- “Overcoming Gender Bias in the Technical Communication Service Course: Instructor Strategies” (Co-presented with Keith Gibson, Diane Martinez, and Amanda Bemer), Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, October 2009
- “The Role of the Cognate Course in Graduate Professional Communication Programs” (Co-presented with Keith Gibson and David Christensen), Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, October 2008
- “Positioned for Leadership: Reaching Out to Meet Broader Institutional Needs in Online Education” (Co-presented with Kelli Cargile Cook), Council for Programs in Technical & Scientific Communication, October 2008
University Teaching Experience

- **Professional Writing**: An introductory course where professional writing majors research the profession and design, write, and revise professional-quality communications for organizational contexts (e.g., proposal, empirical research report, presentation, instruction set, print portfolio). I have taught four sections of this course.

- **Engineering Communications**: Upper-division course administered through the Electrical & Computer Engineering Department that helps students document their senior design projects with a proposal, design review oral presentation, demonstration poster, and final report. I am in my fourth year of teaching this course.

- **Professional Editing**: Upper-division course that gives professional writing majors hands-on experience copyediting, proofreading, and comprehensively editing technical and scientific materials.

- **Science Writing**: Open to all majors, this course emphasizes genres of science writing, the interrelationship of science and technology, and the role of rhetoric in science. Students create professional-quality scientific texts for diverse audiences (e.g., research report, presentation, poster).

- **Document Design**: Upper-division course that helps professional writing majors master document design principles and technologies for real clients.

- **Introduction to Technical Communication**: Open to all majors, this course helps students create technical documents that solve problems and improve situations through communication. They also gain experience collaborating on projects for real clients.

- **Professional Writing Technologies**: An introductory course for professional writing majors who learn technologies and rhetorical strategies for web and print design. Their major project is a web portfolio.

- **Intermediate Writing in the Persuasive Mode**: Required second-year general education course where students practice finding, evaluating, and synthesizing research sources to support an argument. My section also focuses on persuasion and research in the workplace.

- **Introduction to Academic Writing**: First-year general education course that teaches students how to be proficient academic writers and critical readers and thinkers. My section also emphasizes workplace communication skills. I have taught this course online and in a broadcast setting.

Academic & Professional Employment

**Utah State University**, Logan, Utah 84322, 435.797.1000

- **iUTAH (Water Sustainability) EPSCoR Research Assistant**, Funded by the National Science Foundation #1208732, September 2012-May 2013
Duties: Develop and teach technical and scientific communication webinars, edit scientific and research materials, advise researchers of communication strategies for specific projects

- **Graduate Instructor**, English Department and Electrical & Computer Engineering Department, August 2006-May 2013
  Duties: Teach undergraduate courses in professional and technical writing, engineering communications, and composition

- **ADVANCE (Gender Equity and Diversity) Research Assistant**, Funded by the National Science Foundation #0244922, January 2007-December 2008
  Duties: Assisted in researching, developing, and testing a web-based training program; developed marketing/public relations materials for ADVANCE programs

Utah Department of Health, 288 N. 1460 W., Salt Lake City, Utah 84116, 801.538.6710

- **Public Information Specialist/Risk Communication Coordinator**, November 2005-August 2006
  Duties: Assisted with media and public relations; coordinated public information and publicity opportunities; coordinated risk communication plans

Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 168 N. 1950 W., Salt Lake City, Utah 84116, 801.536.4400

- **Public Information Officer**, May 2000-August 2005
  Duties: Planned, executed, and evaluated the department’s media relations program; planned, executed, and evaluated public affairs programs and campaigns

Utah State Office of Education, 250 E. 500 S., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, 801.538.7500

- **Public Information Specialist**, December 1998-February 2000
  Duties: Managed Teacher of the Year program; managed public relations website; coordinated public relations campaigns; performed media relations functions

- **Publications Editor**, February 1997-January 1999
  Duties: Edited publications, documents, articles, websites, and graphics for grammar, accuracy, format, consistency, style, syntax, word usage, and content

Penna Powers Brian Haynes Advertising & Public Relations, 1706 S. Major St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84115, 801.487.4800

  Duties: Wrote feature articles for local and national trade magazines

Newspaper Agency Corporation, 135 S. Main St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, 801.237.2815

- **Projects Editor**, January 1995-August 1996
  Duties: Managed three weekly newspaper supplements to the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*
Bobit Publishing, 21061 S. Western Ave., Torrance, California 90501, 310.533.2400

  Duties: Wrote feature articles for a national trade magazine

### Professional Publications

- **Public Relations Campaign (Award Winning): Free Radon Gas Test Kit**, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 2003
- Hundreds of news releases for the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Office of the Governor, Utah Department of Health, Utah State Office of Education, and International Association of Business Communicators (Utah Chapter), 1998-2006
- **Environmental Connection Newsletter**, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 2000-2005
- **ADVANCE Program’s Interactive Theatre Brochure**, Utah State University, 2007
- **Children's Environmental Health Website**, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, 2004
- “Childhood Obesity: Why Our Children Are Overweight and What We Can Do About It,” *Utah Health Magazine*, April 2006
- “Environmental and Public Health Partnership Leaves Olympic-Sized Legacy in Utah,” *ECOStates Magazine*, Spring 2002
- “$17,000 Fire/Burg System Preserves Ambiance of 175-Year-Old Church,” *Security Sales Magazine*, January 1995
- Approximately 50 advertorials and feature news articles in *At Home in Utah*, the Real Estate section of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and a variety of special sections distributed in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret News*, 1995-1996

### Service & Leadership Experience

- **Educational Testing Service—College Board Advanced Placement Program**
  Reader/Evaluator, English Language and Composition, June 2008-2011
- **Student Association of Graduates of English, Utah State University**
  Publicity Chair, 2007-2008; In Media Res Newsletter Editor, 2007
International Association of Business Communicators, Pacific Plains Region
Board of Directors
Chapter Advocate, 2007-2009

International Association of Business Communicators, Utah Chapter Executive
Board
Past President, 2006-2007
President, 2005-2006
President-Elect & Senior Delegate, 2004-2005
Membership Vice President, 2003-2004
Communication Vice President, 2002-2003
Newsletter Editor, 2001-2002

Academic & Professional Awards

Utah State University English Department Fellowships
Mabel Carlson Fellowship, 2009; Moyle Q. Rice Teaching Fellowship, 2008; New Century Graduate
Writing Fellowship, 2007

Golden Spike Award, Radon Public Service Campaign, International Association of
Business Communicators Utah Chapter & Public Relations Society of America Greater
Salt Lake Chapter, 2004

Outstanding Volunteer, International Association of Business Communicators Utah
Chapter, 2003

Edwin O. Haroldsen Magazine Journalism Award, Brigham Young University,
Department of Communications, 1994