

# Binational Community Engagement Workshop

Fifth Annual Binational Community Engagement Workshop—Goes Virtual!

MARCH, 2021

This year’s workshop was a true testament to how we can adapt our engagement for the collective efforts on stewardship. On March 31st, 38 people came together on Zoom and worked together, with our two presenters, to discuss the most effective ways to engage citizens in science and stewardship. The lessons learned came from all over the watershed and involved a diverse range of passionate scientists, educators, lake users, and associations.

## Stop Spiny: An outreach campaign to stop the spread of spiny water fleas

Meg Duhr, Research Outreach Specialist, Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Centre



The session kicked off hearing from Meg Duhr about “Stop Spiny”, the recently launched comprehensive outreach campaign, to stop the spread of spiny water fleas. Meg focused on making their scientific studies easy to understand, but more importantly makes the results easy to implement for change and accessible for everyone.

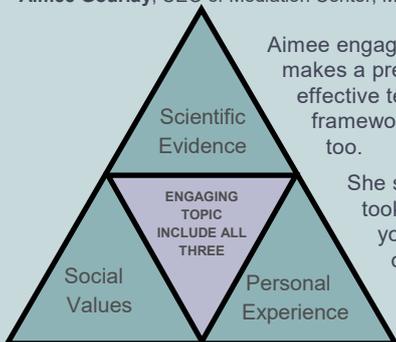
Stop Spiny is focused on prevention, and [StopSpiny.org](http://StopSpiny.org) hosts a range of videos, resources, fact sheets, information pages, and more, that communicate how and why to stop the spread. Meg shared some of the resources, highlighting a map of Minnesota that shows where recreational boaters are coming and going from Lake of the Woods.

### The scary truths about spiny water fleas:

- They don’t get eaten very often
- They can reproduce very easily
- They have severe impacts to native fish populations
- We don’t currently have any control methods once they have been introduced
- Prevention is key!

## Speaking for Science: How you can more effectively engage audiences

Aimee Gourlay, CEO of Mediation Center, Minneapolis, MN.



Aimee engaged the attendees in a discussion to explore what makes a presentation engaging for each of us. She demonstrated effective techniques like storytelling, knowing your audience, frameworks for planning, and how speaking involves listening too.

She shared things she has learned, and asked us what we took from her presentation. Engaging in dialogue with your audience can help you understand where they are coming from and show that you are willing to exchange knowledge and perspectives, establishing trust and credibility. Active engagement increases knowledge retention, enthusiasm, and cognitive capacity.

## Lessons Learned For Public Engagement

### BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR FOCUS AND ROLE

#### What The Focus Is

- Communicating the process of science and data
- Environmental impacts
- Personal, community, and societal values
- Develop priorities or public policy

#### Public’s Role

- Ask questions or interact
- Talk and share views
- Deliberate and problem solve
- Produce recommendations

#### Expert’s Role

- Present
- Two-way communication
- Welcome and value public input
- Incorporate/act on public input

#### Tips For Online Sessions

- Have a behind the scenes helper
- Find ways for participants to be active
- Audio/video: good lighting, centered
- Be prepared for interruptions, technical difficulties

### Breakout Group Takeaways: How Scientists Can Engage The Public

- Start with a meet & greet or ice breaker to engage
- Important to know your audience coming in
- Don’t overwhelm slides with too much detail
- Using everyday language and relating information to real life
- All voices are equal, as a presenter make sure audience is aware you are there to learn from them as well
- Ask open ended questions
- Prepare for conflict. If conflict arises during presentation, arrange having facilitator available
- Show scenic pictures of topic you are going to talk about