
BIOLOGY IS EASY, UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE IS HARD. MUSINGS OF A WOLF BIOLOGIST WITH A LOT OF WINDSHIELD TIME

Kent Laudon, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Kalispell, Montana 59901

Our ability as natural resource professionals to measure, analyze, and thereby describe natural world complexities has reached unprecedented levels. But simultaneously our poor understanding of how society assimilates information limits the efficacy of articulating those concepts to the public. Yet effective public dialogue is critical for informed natural resource management, conservation, and policy. Our traditional public relations methods of continuously distributing information at lower comprehension levels may be inadequate. Here, I will discuss how the synergy of misinformation, groupthink, bias, politics, media, and the blogosphere impedes our ability to convey factual information to the masses. I hope to show why we need a new public communication approach and offer some examples as catalysts to initiate the conversation.