



Talking with Reporters

Talking with reporters can be a breeze – if you know what you’re talking about! Be sure to be prepared. For this, they’ll probably want to know about the story, why it’s unique, why it matters to their readers, and, in maybe not so direct terms, why they should cover it. Be ready to explain to them about your event, the participants or local special places, and how this is not an isolated occurrence but a year-long movement across America binding together communities as they celebrate our wild legacy.

Before the interview – Think through what you want to say. You may even want to write down a few key facts (local wilderness areas, event specifics, wilderness related visitation or economic numbers) or main points to have near you when you talk to the reporter. If it’s a phone interview, have a glass of water nearby in case you get a dry throat.

During the interview – Be calm – they just want to know your story and get to know you. Try to be concise – though you can probably talk for hours about your experiences, unfortunately most articles and news stories are only a few paragraphs long, leaving little space for long quotes. There’s a reason they’re called **soundbites** and not **soundfeasts**. And be helpful. Ask what kind of story they are doing, how much information they need, and make their job as easy as possible.

More tips:

- Listen carefully to the question. Take a few seconds to frame your answer.
- Speak slowly and avoid jargon. Speak with confidence and enthusiasm.
- Smile when you speak. Even if they can't see you, it comes through!
- **Nothing is ever off the record.** Assume that anything you say or give them could end up in the story. Be careful making jokes.

If the reporter asks you a question that you can’t answer, do the best you can, but don’t make anything up or ad lib. Any questions that are outside your range of expertise, don’t hesitate to contact someone on the Wilderness 50th communications team or forward the question to us. Whatever you do, **never give out inaccurate or unformed information.**

After the interview – Sit back and relax – you’ve done well. Thank you for all your help in gaining attention for wilderness. If you are quoted in an article, clip and save it. If you aren't quoted, don't take it personally – it might have been their editor you removed you. If you were helpful, they may call again.