



Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

Telling your story

Members of congress have given us consistent feedback that these small group fly-ins are valuable to them, in part because constituents can tell their personal stories about how Great Lakes restoration is making a meaningful difference in their lives. Here are some tips about how to tell your story effectively in the brief period of time—sometimes only a minute—that you have to speak with a member or their staff.

- Introduce yourself
- Explain why the Great Lakes are important to you
- Tell your story succinctly – in 2-3 minutes:
 - what were things like before Great Lakes restoration?
 - what changes have you seen since it started?
 - include numbers or specific anecdotes if you have them
- Hand the conversation back to your state leader so they can ask the member or their staff to take specific action
- If a member asks you about something and you don't have an answer, that's fine. Finding out an answer and getting back to them later is a great way to remind them of the importance of Great Lakes restoration.

Here's a sample narrative, fictional but based off a true story:

- Hello, my name is Tim Berry.
- I run Berry Manufacturing, a water control equipment manufacturer. I've lived in Michigan my whole life and keeping the Great Lakes healthy is important to me so my kids can grow up fishing and camping along the lakes just like I did.
- Berry Manufacturing has been in business since 1987 and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is giving our employees job security.
- Since the GLRI, we've had consistent orders for submersible pumps that regulate wetland water levels. These pumps help maintain duck habitat or drain areas to establish habitat.
- This consistency in demand doesn't just help my business, it also helps related businesses that we order pipes from, who supply the control structures that house the pipes, and the hunters who benefit from stronger duck habitat.

On your way out, be sure to thank the member or their staff for meeting with you. If there's time, be sure to take a picture to send out on Twitter or Facebook thanking the member for the meeting as well.