



2.2 RULES FOR SUCCESS

An effective advocate is largely determined by how well one can communicate his or her issue(s) or position(s) to policymakers. Numerous communication techniques are available; there is no one best method to achieve your goals. There are, however, some basic things you can do to enhance your advocacy efforts. These basic rules are mostly common sense, common courtesy, or both.

- **Understand the basics of the legislative process.** This will help you speak intelligently in regards to proposed solutions or ways of moving forward with your issue. See [Section 5](#) for an overview of the process.
- **Be able to provide a concise, clear description of the issue.** Realize that most legislators likely do not know the details about wildlife issues. You need to be able to provide a quick and complete explanation of the issue(s) and why it is important to their constituents and wildlife conservation. This “elevator speech” synopsis should be able to be given in 1-2 minutes.
- **Develop a powerful personal story.** You are the one with the first-hand knowledge of how these policies impact your ability to manage and conserve wildlife – use that to your advantage.
- **Know how to win – and lose – with grace.** Be respectful of those who agree and disagree with your position. You won’t win every battle, but how you lose one battle might impact your ability to win the next.
- **Be generous in your thanks and praise.** Take the time to express appreciation and support to legislators and agency members that make tough decisions in your favor. Use letters, phone calls, and emails to express your gratitude.
- **Find common ground on issues.** Work to find issues in common with other people and speak with one voice on the issues whenever possible. Partnerships with other organizations can really help strengthen your arguments and elevate your issues in the eyes of decision-makers.

