Your Water Colorado Blog
Guest Blogger Policy 2018

The purpose of this document is to give Your Water Colorado guest bloggers simple guidelines for crafting a compelling and engaging blog post, including what to write about, the tone and style of writing to use, and tips for helping Water Education Colorado (WEco) foster a community of connected blog followers.

What should you write about?

Water Education Colorado maintains a regularly updated list of topics it is currently looking to highlight on the blog and also accepts pitches for blog posts on any water-related topic that may be of interest to readers. Consider what issues or topics you find compelling or are in your area of expertise. Then send your idea to Caitlin@yourwatercolorado.org. Once the focus of your blog post is established between you and WEco, think about what unique viewpoint you bring to the topic that will inform and inspire readers while also being thought- and conversation-provoking. Then write about it! Here are some guidelines:

Our process:

1. Work with a staff member to determine a topic and discuss an angle and content ideas.
2. Send a Word document with your draft text (approximately 500-1,000 words) to your staff contact, who will edit your text and return a redlined version and/or any comments.
3. You'll have the option to use Wordpress to upload your blog content directly to the blog, where it will await approval by a WEco moderator OR send your revised post back to the staff contact for posting. On rare occasions if we aren't able to negotiate edits on a post and it doesn't meet our standards or fall in line with the topic we discussed, we may decide not to publish.

4. Please provide 2-3 photos and/or graphics to include with your post.
5. Include a short bio (50-75 words) and photo to include at the end of your post.
Content standards and policy:

Blogs use less formal language than newspaper articles, technical reports, etc. Don't be afraid to let your personality come through in your writing. This could mean inserting humor, personal anecdotes, and perspectives. However, be conscious that drawing absolute conclusions has the tendency to alienate your audience.

Please also keep in mind that Water Education Colorado promotes the sharing of diverse perspectives and the analysis of different courses of action for better overall decision making. The goal of the Your Water Colorado blog is to engage the online community in constructive dialogue that fosters well-rounded understanding of water issues and tradeoffs statewide. It's important to avoid making libelous claims or attacking other organizations or viewpoints.

Additionally, we avoid publishing posts written specifically to promote a product or event without any educational focus. In other words, we're happy to point people toward resources in provided they have the opportunity to learn something on the way, but the blog isn't used for pure marketing purposes.

How to use WordPress to post directly on the Your Water Colorado blog:

1. You first must receive an invitation to become a blog contributor. Contact Caitlin@yourwatercolorado.org if you haven't yet received an invitation.
2. Create a WordPress Account (the invitation to contribute will direct you to do this if you don't already have an account).
3. Accept the invitation to contribute to the Your Water Colorado blog.
4. When logged into your WordPress Account, click on "new post." There are a number of places to find this. If you look at the black bar across the top and hover over the "W" in the upper left corner, you should see "new post." Next to the "W" you should see "Your Water Colorado Blog," and if you hover over that there should be a pull-down menu. On the pull-down menu, hover over "new" and then select "new post."
5. Once you've accessed the "new post" form, insert your title and article into the text boxes. Insert any links by clicking on the button that looks like a chain link in the toolbar above the main text box. Once your post is complete, click the button that says "submit for review." Your text will be sent to a blog administrator for editing and final formatting.
6. Send any relevant photos, graphs or other graphics to Caitlin@yourwatercolorado.org to be inserted into your post.
7. The blog administrator will publish your post once it has been edited. You will be notified when your post is published.

5 Tips for Writing the Perfect Blog Post:

1. Keep it short: Blog posts can be anywhere from 500 up to 1,000 words. Also, remember that you have about four seconds to hook an online reader: Readers should be able to grasp from the first two sentences what the rest of the blog will be about.

2. Provide links: Don't be afraid to comment on current news, linking to water stories in the press and large media outlets. And remember to link to other posts within the Your Water Colorado blog as well. Generally, all posts should contain four or more hyperlinks — one or two that link to content on other websites and one or two that link to content on the Your Water Colorado blog. WEco staff can help with identifying related Your Water Colorado posts.

3. Engage your readers: One of the simplest ways to entice readers to interact with you is to ask them a question. Consider starting your post with a question to hook them into reading more. Or end your post with a question to encourage commenting and feedback.

4. Be yourself: Readers are interested in your posts a) because of the information you impart, b) because they want to be entertained, and c) to connect on a personal level. Authenticity is king — if the goal of the blog is to create community, then the blogger needs to interact with the community. Be transparent about who you are and your goals for writing the post. And when readers comment, be sure to comment back. Think of this as an ongoing conversation that you're initiating.

5. Publicize: You're published! Tell your colleagues, friends, customers, local media, Facebook and Twitter followers and anyone else who might be interested about your blog post. There's no better way to engage readers, begin a conversation and make the impact you want than to go out and invite people to read and comment on your article.