



2021 Water Hub social media report

Sharing data insights and themes that resonated with reporters and the water movement

Overview

After going through the exercise of looking back on our data for the year, the Water Hub team wanted to share our takeaways to help with others' 2022 goal setting and plans. We hope these insights support the water movement community and inspire you all with data-informed content strategy recommendations.

Platform strategy

To-date, Water Hub's priority social media channel has been Twitter, as the best place to reach out target audience of journalists, decisionmakers, and water thought leaders.

Theme-spotting

We found that content that discussed the current political climate and infrastructure negotiations did well along with water affordability topics. We also learned that keeping a finger on the pulse of emerging water news helps to grow credibility. See more below on what themes rose to the top in 2021.

- **Water policy:** legislation updates and investments, infrastructure
- **Events:** drought briefings, infrastructure spending implementation, water cultural talks
- **Advocacy:** elevating water affordability/access/safety disparities, Indigenous and other community-driven leadership
- **Solutions:** at both community and government level from green infrastructure projects like wastewater recycling plants to tapping TEK
- **Research:** voter polling, data visualization

Post formats that worked

We tested different content formats on Twitter throughout 2021. Once we started analyzing what worked, we applied similar strategies to different key moments with positive results.

See our hot tips below:



Water Hub at Climate Nexus
@water_hub



1/ Peru is tapping into [#Indigenous](#) land and water management practices. Now a climate response and [#WaterResilience](#) leader, the country is one of the first in the world with laws mandating utilities to invest in [#NaturalInfrastructure](#).



bbc.com
Why Peru is reviving a pre-Incan technology for water
Peru is turning to ancient indigenous techniques and natural ecosystems to keep its taps running, as climate change threatens to dry out its water supply.

1:00 PM · May 19, 2021 · Twitter Web App

24 Retweets 6 Quote Tweets 54 Likes

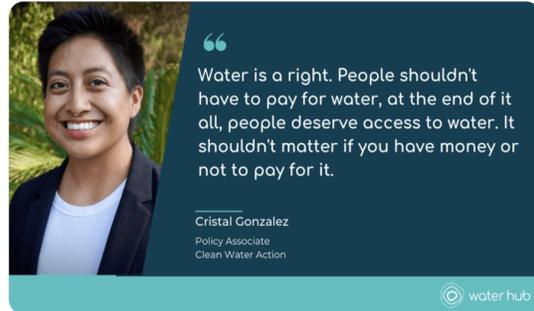


Water Hub at Climate Nexus
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NEW BLOG 📖 : We talk how CA responds to a shrinking water supply, Human Right to Water & [#WaterAffordability](#) in the latest [@MavensNotebook](#) column ft. [@csgonzaa](#) & Jennifer Clary from [@cleanh2oaction](#) 💧

Click here to read more --> bit.ly/2YxvQMX



9:58 AM · Oct 8, 2021 · Sprout Social

2 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 12 Likes



Water Hub at Climate Nexus
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It's 🥒 time, [#WaterTwitter](#). Show us your [#WaterMemes](#).



11:43 AM · Dec 27, 2021 · Sprout Social

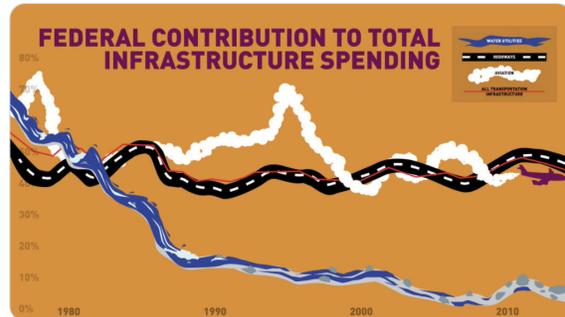
1 Retweet 5 Quote Tweets 12 Likes



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Federal water spending has dried up, delaying updates to our aging waterworks and leaving 2 million Americans without safe [#DrinkingWater](#) and sanitation. The time to act is now. [#WaterWeek2021](#)



11:39 AM · Apr 26, 2021 · HubSpot

19 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 23 Likes



Threads: [This](#) post about Peru’s use of traditional Indigenous knowledge as a water and climate solution was our most popular post of the year. We applied a similar strategy—threaded tweets with experts and keywords tagged throughout—to other long-form articles. Not only did we gain more followers and high engagement, we also told more accessible stories.

Data visualization: One of our big campaign moments this year was [#WaterAtWork](#). We had the opportunity to partner with a designer, Innosanto Nagara, who helped us make a jobs case for water infrastructure spending. The [post](#) promoting it landed as the second most engaging of the year.

Quote graphics: One of the things that gets us up in the morning is celebrating water leadership across communities. We found that when we took the extra step to create a graphic with a quote and a headshot, there was higher engagement.

Memes: Late in 2021, our digital director, Jessica, was scrolling through Twitter laughing at wonky water memes, so we decided to try our hand at it. The [post](#) landed in the top five posts of the year. Our takeaway? Lean into levity. Water is a dense topic to wrap minds around, so it can be refreshing to see the movement loosen up to communicate in less traditional ways to still get a point across.

Live tweeting: One of our top performing post formats was when we’d live tweet events. Not only is it good to show up for your partners, live tweeting also helps break down complicated report releases or other information shared. Pro tip: mix up your posts with screenshots of interesting presentation slides, speakers, or even play with GIFs to keep people engaged—and don’t forget to keep pointing people back to key landing pages to show your support. You’ll notice that event hosts, participating organizations, and others will share the content helping you boost the message and grow your own audience.

Data takeaways

We grew our Twitter following to 1,142, and saw nearly 15k engagements and 700k impressions on the 1,000+ posts we shared in 2021. The new followers hailed from a wide range of sectors, including the water world, the greater environmental justice movement, the communications realm, higher education, and more. This is fantastic for the water movement because it shows that we’re communicating in a way that is accessible for more than just the “water works” like ourselves.

The biggest jump in followers occurred in quarter two which also claimed the most “top posts” of any quarter. The surge is a nod to the launch of our [Water at Work](#) campaign and engaging content highlighting Indigenous leadership (ex: [Peru’s TEK](#), [Julia Fay Bernal’s appearance](#) on the Climate One Podcast, [#StopLine3](#) support, and [Ean Tafoya](#)).

One observation: Be spontaneous! The meme breaking down the cons of desalination plants and the last-minute decision to live tweet of a California Natural Resources event landed in our top 10 most engaged tweets of 2021. **This is a note to all of us, to continue to think outside of the box, to share the ideas, and to just try things!**

KPIs:

- Audience total: 1,142: Goal KPI: 10% audience growth; Actuals: 23% audience growth rate per quarter
- Engagement rate: 2.2% average (industry average is 1.6%); average # of monthly engagements: 3,696 / overall: 14,784
- Average # of monthly impressions: 173,073 / overall: 692,290
- Total # of mentions: 2.6K
- Total unique authors: 934
- Top 10 posts: *(at least half of the top posts are about infrastructure!)*
 - **May 19** [thread](#) of Peru's use of TEK as a water and climate solution
 - **April 26** [infographic](#) showcasing the decline in water infrastructure investment from 1980-now
 - **May 26** [promotion](#) of the new Water at Work website
 - **December 27** [meme](#) emphasizing the negative impact of desalination plants
 - **April 10** [op-ed](#) by Ilhan Omar and Tara Houska on Line 3 oil pipeline
 - **January 14** [highlight](#) of green infrastructure as a resilient solution with 3 prominent tags ([Allison Harvey Turner](#), [Randall Kempner](#), [Ridgway White](#)) and a link to Water Foundation's funding [article](#) (included a graphic from our polling results).
 - **February 11** [promotion](#) of the Color of Water Valentine's Day campaign with an infographic featuring [Arohi Sharma](#)
 - **October 8** [promotion](#) of a blog featuring [Cristal Gonzales](#) and Jennifer Clary from [Clean Water Action](#). The piece focused on affordable water access and low-income utility programs.
 - **October 21** [event promo](#) of a Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus/The Shape of Us event with [Imagining America](#) featuring tags for [We The People Detroit](#), [Benny Starr](#), [US Water Alliance](#), and [Policy Link](#)
 - **July 13** [live tweet](#) of [California Natural Resources Agency's](#) Speaker Series event covering the drought in CA
- Top 5 authors sharing our content:
 - **March 31:** [National Resource Defense Council](#) (344k followers) RTed our [tweet](#) calling for plumbers and pipefitters to replace lead pipes for Biden's America's Job Plan
 - **November 30:** [Ari Shapiro](#) (228k followers) RTed our [tweet](#) highlighting the disparities of stormwater management in low-income communities of color in Michigan

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- **March 31:** [Pat Fuller](#) (94k followers) RTed our [tweet](#) with the infographic showing voter agreement on public water systems being a threat to drinking water safety
 - **January 21:** [Fresno Bee](#) (94k followers) RTed our [tweet](#) calling on VP Harris to champion equitable water solutions
 - **October 1:** [Movement for Black Lives](#) (86k followers) RTed our [tweet](#) with an infographic detailing the discrepancies in water affordability