

Let's Talk About Water (LTAW)

LTAW Event Program FAQs

What exactly is *Let's Talk About Water*?

"[Let's Talk About Water](#)" (LTAW) is a film symposium designed to bring together experts and the public to talk about the complex water issues facing society. LTAW events are based on a formula developed by CUAHSI and film and picture researcher Linda Lilienfeld, for using documentaries and popular films to promote water and earth science education.

Q. What is the format of a Let's Talk About Water (LTAW) program?

A. The basic format of the event is simple: a panel of experts and the audience view a water documentary (such as "Last Call at the Oasis," "Gasland," or "Chasing Ice") together, followed by an extended moderated discussion period between the panel and the audience. Properly handled, this simple format can be very effective.

The format of the LTAW program is flexible enough to adapt to your scheduling needs. Often, the program is a half-day event, including the film showing, a short break, followed by a moderated panel and audience discussion. We have found that providing lunch or an evening reception helps to attract an audience.

A film creates a context of subject and language for the discussion - it gets the audience and the panel on the same page. The moderators must actively manage the discussion, both challenging the panelists with follow up questions, asking questions to simplify the language the expert is using, and passing a question among panelists to bring out different points of view. We have found that these discussions can easily be sustained for 90 to 120 minutes with active audience participation. Modifications to the program include incorporating a student poster session before the film screening or allowing time for students to discuss career opportunities with panelists. **We also try to make it fun!**

Q. What makes the program successful?

A. There are variations in the format of each LTAW program but we have found that many of the events follow these six simple rules to success. View more details on the CUAHSI website [[LTAW keys to success](#)]

1. Identify your place and space
2. Film and themes – choose a film that connects to your audience and your community

Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc.

Tel: 339.221.5400

196 Boston Ave, Suite 3000
781.219.4029
Medford, MA 02155

Fax:

www.cuahsi.org

3. Create the right panel composition – make sure to incorporate local expertise
4. Build the buzz – develop a marketing campaign to reach your target audience
5. Find an effective host
6. Licensing (of film)

Q. How much effort does it take to organize the LTAW event? Should I involve other people on my campus?

A. A well run event will take significant preparation and as a host you will need to take a leadership role. We recommended that an organizing committee is formed to assist in the development of the LTAW program as many coordination and logistical tasks will need to be managed such as the purchasing and licensing of the film being shown, establishing a venue, and developing your marketing strategy. Suggested team responsibilities might be distributed to a Chair (general oversight, scheduling, budget, fundraising), Communications (pamphlets, media, email and posters), Venue and Volunteer Coordinator, Reception Organizer (food, drinks, cash box, tickets), and Panelist Discussion Organizer (film, panelists/moderator selection and briefing, gifts)

Q. What is average cost of hosting a LTAW event?

A. The average cost of past events has ranged between \$6,000 and \$10,000. Organizers often work with their university, other universities in the area, student groups, and other sources (foundations, sponsors, etc.) to hold these events. In-kind support such as venue space or catering can help offset the costs of a program allowing you to focus resources on recruiting key panelists and marketing your event.

Example Event Budget

Expense	Description	Estimated Cost
Room rental	Cost for venue space	\$0-1500
Projectionist fee	If not included in room rental	\$0-300
Public performance rights (film)	Acquired from film distribution company	\$500
Film purchase	Films for event and for panelists to view prior to event	\$100-\$150
Panel	Honoraria, travel expenses, accommodations, gifts	\$1000-\$3000
Catering	Food/refreshments for	\$0-\$3500

Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc.

Tel: 339.221.5400

196 Boston Ave, Suite 3000
781.219.4029
Medford, MA 02155

Fax:

www.cuahsi.org

	attendees and panelists	
Advertising and marketing	E.g., posters and flyers, t-shirts for event volunteers, newspaper ads, etc.	\$500

Q. How can I find financial support for the event? What is the “Challenge Grant” program?

A. CUAHSI’s Challenge Grant program provides matching funds of up to \$3000 (\$1-to\$1 match) to help subsidize LTAW events. Other options for finding funding include departmental or university funds, student group fundraising, and securing sponsorships from local companies or organizations. Our past awardees and hosts have successfully executed events using several of these sources. CUAHSI staff can talk with you more specifically on ideas for fundraising.

Q. Sounds interesting but I’m not sure what film I should show. Do you have suggestions?

A. CUAHSI can help support you in the development of your LTAW program through consultation. Linda Lilienfeld, the LTAW Program Director, has over 35 years of experience in the film industry and has viewed over 300 films. Search the film archive for ideas or contact CUAHSI to discuss the needs of your program.
Browse LTAW’s film archive: <http://letstalkaboutwater.com/film-inventory-summary-listing/>

Q. Who should the panel composition be?

A. Big names always attract an audience. University faculty provides a scientific expertise but it is also critical that your panel consists of at least one local representative who will be able to provide insight into community issues. Diversity in your panel (e.g., profession, career-level, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, etc.) help to round out a successful panel!

Q. How do I market for my event?

A. There are many different ways that each event can be advertised. Take advantage of your local resources and students on campus. Typical marketing strategies have included the use of the following:

- Event web page, social media outlets (e.g., develop a Facebook event and use the RSVP option), event flyers (electronic and paper), listservs, newsletters, local newspapers, radio, press releases, online school calendar of events, course requirement or extra credit for student participation, student poster competition with cash prizes, promotional t-shirts, networking with local community organizations (watershed

associations, museums, theaters, other), partnering with other universities in your area

Q. If I receive a Challenge Grant, will CUAHSI accept overhead costs billed to the grant?

A. CUAHSI will not pay overhead and will instead pay invoices directly to avoid overhead costs (e.g., film costs, catering, venue rental fees, etc.). A portion of your award can be requested upfront to support the development of your LTAW program. All other costs will be paid on a reimbursement basis after the completion of the event and a final report has been submitted to CUAHSI.

Still have questions about the **Let's Talk About Water** program?
Please contact CUASHI [[contact us](#)] directly and we would be happy to assist you further.

Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc.

Tel: 339.221.5400

196 Boston Ave, Suite 3000

781.219.4029

Medford, MA 02155

Fax:

www.cuahsi.org