

A wide-angle photograph of a South Dakota landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of dry, golden-brown grass. A dirt path leads from the bottom center towards the middle ground. In the middle ground, two people are standing on a flat, rocky ledge or cliff. The background features more rugged, layered rock formations under a cloudy, overcast sky. The word "South Dakota" is written in a white, cursive script across the upper middle of the image.

*South Dakota*

**How to Tell Your Story Via the Media (Media Pitching 101)**

**Who has dreamed of reading  
your story in newspapers,  
magazines, digital sites, or  
seeing yourself on the national  
news?**

**GOAL: Create News Around Your  
Attraction, Destination or  
Company, and Get Media  
Coverage**

**Key Takeaway: The ability to  
draft a captivating (must open  
and read), media-worthy pitch,  
today**

**PS: Today's session will also help you get ANY emailed  
opened**



## How to Tell Your Story Via the Media (Media Pitching 101)

- **We'll Discuss:**
  - **Strategy**
  - **Three components before writing a successful pitch for media**
  - **Anatomy of a successful pitch**
    - **Understanding Trends**
    - **Creating an internal pitching, hosting and targeting calendar**
    - **The mechanics of crafting your pitch**
    - **Real life pitch examples**
- **Q+A**

# Strategy – Understanding the Mind of Media





**Strategy – Start by  
Understanding These Three  
Trend Components:**

- 1. Media – Future Focused**
- 2. Consumer – What resonates  
with visitors (readers,  
viewers, audience) right  
now?**
- 3. Industry/Competitor – What  
stories have already been  
told, and by who?**





An aerial photograph of a dark asphalt road that winds through a dense, green forest. The road has several sharp turns and curves. A small white car is visible on the road, positioned between the main text and the 'South Dakota' logo. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting.

*South Dakota*

**MEDIA ARE OBSESSED WITH  
TRENDS**

**How does your destination,  
brand or attraction fit into  
current, or upcoming  
consumer and media trends?**



## ..... Let's Start with Media Trends



Media are obsessed with the future. Why?

**Pro Tip:** Consider Lead Time – Editorial is generally written at least six months in advance of appearance or publication date.

Saving Airlines  
from Themselves

Application  
Required

What is “Real” News, & Where  
Consumers Get It

Digital First Mentality, and  
Content is Still King

Local Communities & Hospitality  
Entities Join Forces

An Eye on Diversity

## Consumer Trends



Consumers aren't concerned about what's happening in the future – they want to know what's affecting them right now!

**Pro Tip:** Short lead stories (especially broadcast – think: Nightly National News) are dominated by real-time data and expert/on-the-ground commentary.

Nostalgia

National Parks

Beat the Crowds

Timelessness

Demographic Trends (families, couples, spring break, etc)

Thematic Travel (festive, Thanksgiving, Spring Break, etc)

Pop Culture

Food Sourcing + Hunting

Deals



# Strategy: Create An Internal Calendar for Pitching, Hosting and Targeting

## Key Considerations:

1. **Lead-Time** (at all times)
2. **Thematic Programming** – The news cycle is very predictable; i.e. Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.)
3. **Assets** – Photography, video, data and access to experts

Travel South Dakota 2023/2024 Pitch Ideas		
	Long Lead	Short Lead
September	Where to Travel in 2024	Last Call for Summer! Savor the last days of the season in SoDak + Fall Break Planning
	Plan Your Holiday Getaway to the Mount Rushmore State	Indigenous Peoples' Day (second Mnday in October)
October	Springs Festivals & Events 2024	Off Season Secrets: Skip the Crowds and See More of SoDak at these 6 Spots
	SoDak is a Winter Wonderland for Adventure Travelers	Celebrate the Holiday Season in SoDak: Festivals and Events Worth Seeing this Year
November	Spring Break in SoDak: How to Plan an Epic Trip to the Mount Rushmore State	South Dakota is a Winter Wonderland for Outdoor Experiences
	2024 anniversaries, milestones, and what's new in South Dakota	Thanksgiving Short Lead
December	President's Day Activation Pitching?	Discover Something New in South Dakota
	Holiday Happening in South Dakota	Six Ways to Be a Better Traveler in South Dakota this Year
January	Adventure for All: Accessible Outdoor Spots to Check out this Summer + Operation Mobility	Presidents' Day Pitching
	The Way Things Were: Take a Heritage Road Trip through South Dakota (historic + Laura Ingles)	Valentine's Day Getaways in South Dakota
February	Thinking about Summer Already? Us Too. Here are the Best Places Aroud South Dakota to Make a Splash this Summer.	Break Dry January at These South Dakota Breweries, Distilleries and Wineries
	Get Wild in the West: Your Guide to Nightlife and New Adventures in the Black Hills	Get Cozy in these South Dakota Cabins for an Secluded Getaway
March	Pride Month	Go on a Baby Animal Safari in SoDak
	Indigenous Peoples Day (6.21)	Spring has Sprung, Time to get Outside in South Dakota
April	605 Day + Responsible Travel	Summer Vacation Destinations Across South Dakota
	Summer Festivals + Events	Cultivating A New Way to Travel in South Dakota: Agritourism Experiences Worth Checking Out
May	Native Voices: Sharing the Stories of the First People of South Dakota	Frozen in Time: Experience the Soul of the Midwest One Scoop at a Time on this Ice-Cream Road Trip
	The Road to Sturgis: The Legendary History and Highways of South Dakota's Motorcycle Scene	Swing into Summer with these Golf Getaways in South Dakota
June	Celebrate Labor Day in South Dakota	Rethink Your Beach Vacation at These South Dakotan Waterfronts
	Buffalo Round Up + Western Experiences	Celebrate the 4th of July in South Dakota
July	Get Spooky in SoDak: Haunted and Historic Site to See Across the State	This One's for the Girls: SoDak is the Ultimate Getaway Destination for Every Type of Gal
	South Dakota is Setting its Sights on Conservation Through Hunting (early pheasant hunting + sustainable travel story)	Immersive Harvest and Hunting /Sporting Experiences
August	Save on Skiing in South Dakota	Spend the Fall Break in SoDak: Family Friendly Things to Do and See
	Thanksgiving	Leaf Peeping for History Buffs



# **Where Do You Want Your Story to Appear?**



**Strategy: Let's talk about targeting.**

**Become a student of the media eco-system**

1. **Traditional Media**
2. **Broadcast**
3. **New Media**

**Pro Tip One:** Start with a simple list of the top ten places you want to earn coverage.

Hone in on one (perfect) person, and do a 'creepy' amount of research.

- You're on the right track if you can answer: "is this person a cat or a dog person?"

**Pro Tip Two:** Google news search is the ultimate FREE tool for pre-pitch research.



# **Anatomy of a Successful Pitch: Four Rules for Success**





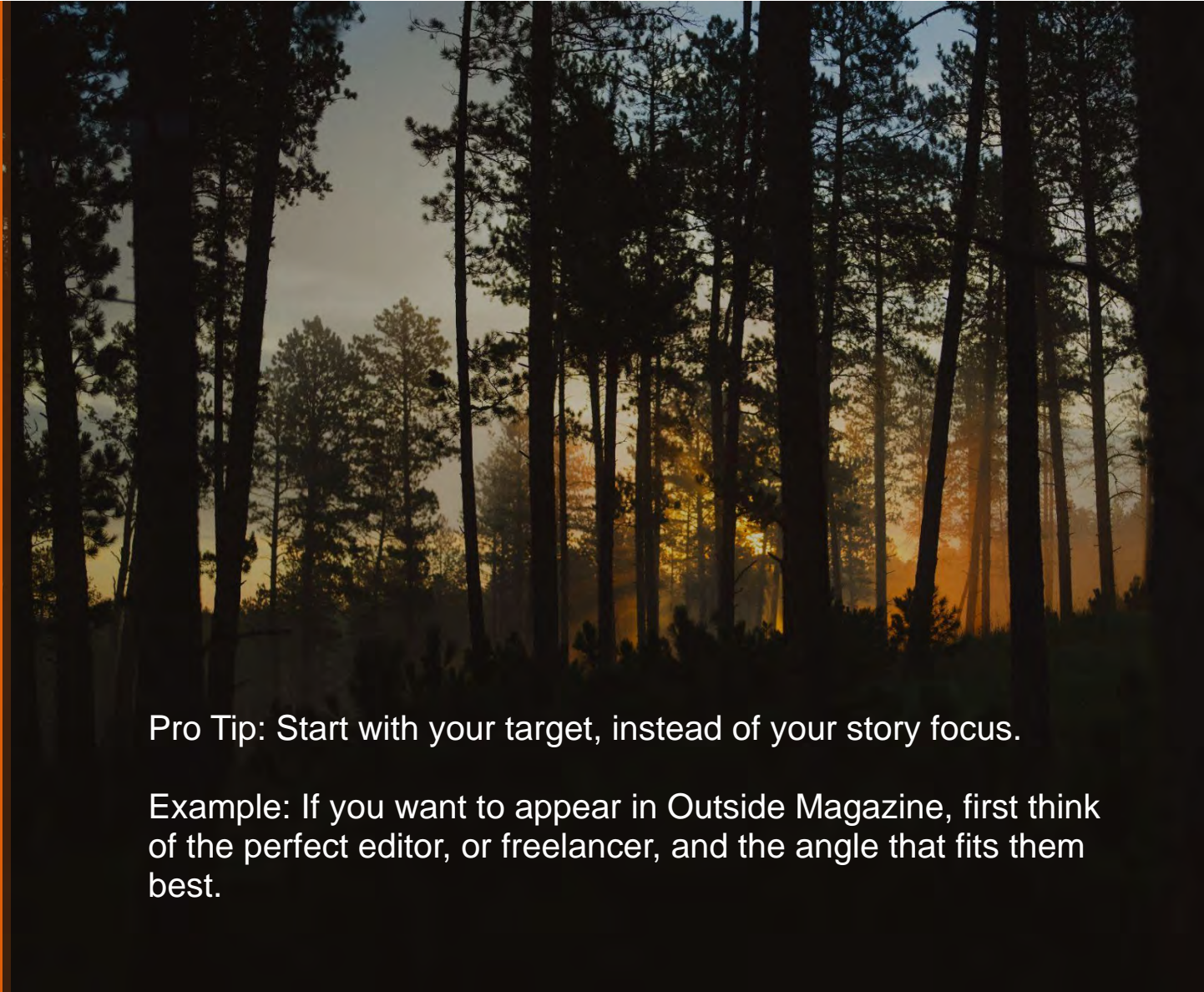
## The Mechanics of Crafting Your Pitch

**Rule One:** Your subject line is your first impression.

1. First name, ALWAYS
2. Succinct, to fit in reading panel

**Pro Tip:** Start with your target, instead of your story focus.

**Example:** If you want to appear in Outside Magazine, first think of the perfect editor, or freelancer, and the angle that fits them best.





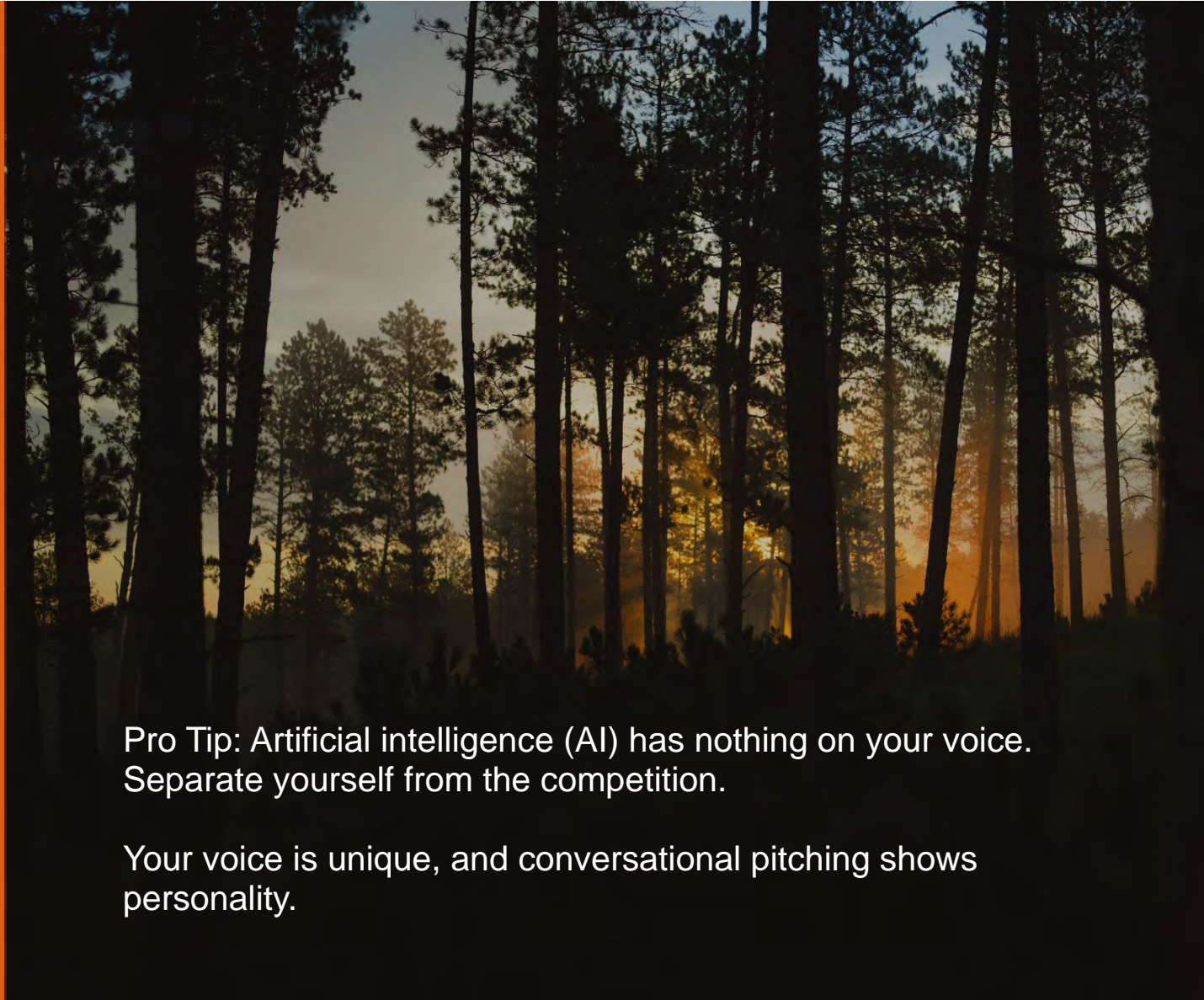
## The Mechanics of Crafting Your Pitch

**Rule Two:** Utilize a "qualifier" sentence

1. **Be Specific** – I'm writing today about THIS idea, for this section/publication, and I chose to pitch you because you're the perfect fit because...
2. **Be Succinct** – The fewer words, the better.

Pro Tip: Artificial intelligence (AI) has nothing on your voice. Separate yourself from the competition.

Your voice is unique, and conversational pitching shows personality.







## The Mechanics of Crafting Your Pitch

**Rule Three:** Consider Your Competition, and WHY NOW?

1. **Competition** – Your destination, attraction or company versus every other competitor.
2. **“Why Now? What’s New”** – These are ALWAYS the first question via media, so be prepared to answer, or better yet, position it in your initial outreach.

Pro Tip: If you don’t have anything new, you can manufacture it!

Example: You can take any existing offering, and place a new twist on it to make it entirely ‘new’ again. You can also combine existing offerings to make a new experience.







## The Mechanics of Crafting Your Pitch

### Rule Four: Be Prepared for Success

1. **Asset Prep** – if you receive response, you need all necessary assets asap. This includes:
  - Photography, Video, Potential Hosting Budget (for on-site visit)

Pro Tip: Make the story bigger, or your part of the story the lede

By offering deliverables such as photo, or video, interview opportunities with experts, you have the best chance at being the lede in the story, or appearing with additional quotes or direct links to your website.



# REAL LIFE PITCH EXAMPLES

Re: Hi Eugene - Instead of Heading West...Go East (said virtually no one)



Eugene Buchanan <eugene@paddlinglife.com>

Monday, June 26, 2023 at 10:54 AM

To: Campbell Levy

Hi Eugene,

I just read your great Capitol Reef piece in MJ, which led me to your personal website – I’m a huge fan of Steamboat. I’m based in Denver, and we spend every Fourth of July in your town. Perhaps the best Fourth parade in the Colorado high-country...followed closely by Aspen, and then Telluride. We lived in Aspen for a number of years, and it has lost all of its luster; something Steamboat still retains (imo, anyway).

I also see you were formerly a reporter for Denver Business Journal, so you likely know the plight of anyone who lives on the Front Range who adventures around Colorado. Every weekend, virtually every human being ventures WEST on I70, into the Rocky Mountains...because what other option exists? To the east, all that exists is a never-ending corn crop, and a flat expanse as far as the eye can see...and it doesn’t stop until you get somewhere east of Pennsylvania.

But there is a magical solution very few Front Rangers know about. South Dakota’s Black Hills, and Badlands National Park – less than a six-hour trip. Badlands boasts just over a million annual visitors, but is one of the gems of the national park system. We work with Travel South Dakota, and I’d love to chat more about the state as a whole.

2023 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Crazy Horse Monument. A first-person visit and narrative-style piece would be a good way to go here – I’ve found very few editors or readers have actually been to Crazy Horse, and it’s also home to the Indian Museum of North America (which offers history and cultural education opportunities from over 300 Native Nations). If interested, we could likely offer access to the team who are working on the monument. It’s especially unique, because none of us (including those currently working on the monument) will actually realize its completion in our lifetime.

Loved the Capitol Reef piece.

All the best,  
Campbell

Campbell Levy

Black Hills National Park - Badlands National Park



Hi Wes - Love wild places? This state will convince you to become a hunter



 Campbell Levy <campbell@louhammond.com>

Friday, August 18, 2023 at 1:29 PM

To: siler.wes@gmail.com

*South Dakota*

Hi Wes,

Thanks for taking the time to chat via 'the Gram.' I enjoy your often contrarian viewpoint on hunting and conservation (as well as the West in general). I read to be inspired, but also to engage and consider (and reconsider) familiar ways of thinking, and entertain new voices and viewpoints. I think you do a pretty good job asking questions, and dispelling antiquated (or uninformed) ways of thinking... and backing it up (which is entertaining).

As mentioned, we work with Travel South Dakota. As agritourism has risen in popularity, so too have 'city-slicker-esque' offerings – they provide little in functional or historic experience, and zero sense of place. There's an incredible story to tell highlighting South Dakota's sense of place/sweet spot in the ag-tourism space...but it's an entirely different animal – going well beyond simple farm and ranch experiences to include sport, conservation and perhaps most impressively, one-mile sourced whole foods in virtually every town within the state's 77,000 square-mile footprint. City dwellers are probably more obsessed with being close to their food than ever, and much like you can walk to a bodega on every corner in Manhattan, your food is equally accessible in SoDak.

South Dakota is in an enviable position – for now. It's too late for much of the West to focus on conserving wild places, but through HUNTING, and a shared lens with conservation/sustainability, South Dakota is perhaps the preeminent leader in North America for preservation of wild places. I had mentioned [Second Century Habitat Fund](#). It's an org that is quite unique – I've spoken with their leadership, and they insist there's not another like it in North America in terms of how they have supported habitat stewardship and conservation through hunting (this is a story unto itself – lots of interesting background here, and strategic partnerships with expected and unexpected brands and organizations – ranging from firearms to the Nature Conservancy).

I had a call with a luxury hunting lodge purveyor, Sal Roseland, who is the fund's development director. He owns one of only about 20 (according to him) high-end private lodges in SoDak. He has some openings in October – if you're available, it could be a great opportunity to get to the state for a hunt, and hear firsthand about the fund. I could likely get other leadership to meet with you while on-site.

Lmk your thoughts after your walk in the woods.

Thanks!  
Campbell

Hi Emily - The future of food lies in past — via traditional American Indian methods



• Campbell Levy

Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 3:07 PM

To: emily.saladino@voxmedia.com; Bcc: prm@muckrack.com

To protect your privacy, some external images in this message were not downloaded.

Download external images

Hi Emily,

I received Jess' OOO, and it's great to see your name pop up as a suitable contact for stories/freelance ideas.

This would be an outstanding first-person piece for Thrillist! Would be wonderful to have a writer visit and tell the story for readers. Please lmk your thoughts.

Farmers struggling with natural disasters, drought, flooding, and more; the antidote to agriculture and food insecurity woes likely can be found not by looking to the future...but to the past — traditional agriculture, ingredients and methods cultivated for thousands of years via North America's American Indians.

One such example, and an incredible story (that has yet to be told), is via two Oneida Nation citizens, Steve and Becky Webster. The couple purchased 10 acres of land on Wisconsin's Oneida Reservation (2017), and since, with the help of friends and family, they built a home (literally from scratch, using traditional Native American materials and methods); now, they're growing traditional, heirloom foods with an emphasis on Haudenosaunee varieties of corn, beans and squash.

Their philosophy is that every time an indigenous person plants a seed, it is an act of resistance and an assertion of sovereignty. Steve and Becky's long-term goal for this property is as a place to host events where the community comes to learn about planting, growing, harvesting, seed keeping, food preservation, food storage, as well as making traditional tools and crafts. In summer of 2021, they officially became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and my goal is to shine a light on their work and traditions.

For visitors, the Websters offer a number of hands-on ways to learn — this includes farmstead tours, and classes like corn mush cooking among others.

Their progress, and projects can be found here: <https://ukwakhwa.com/>. If interested, I'd love to have you visit Wisconsin and see the Webster's project firsthand.

Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Campbell



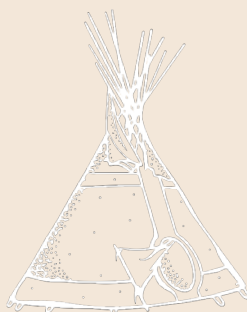
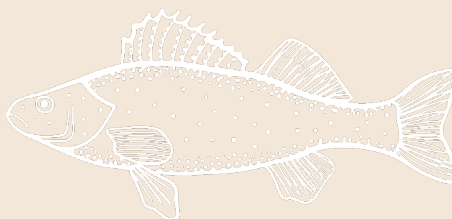
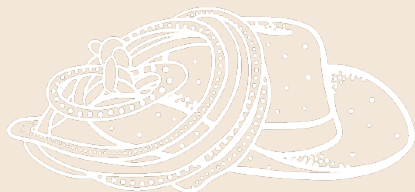
FINAL PRO TIP: Remember, one of your most powerful tools is to not pitch at all...

Media are inundated with readers, or viewers who reach out to explain their disagreement, disdain, or just to insult them...

Even if you have nothing to pitch, reaching out and saying how much you enjoyed a person's work goes a long way!

QUESTIONS?







*South Dakota*