

Practicum in Collaborative Conservation

ENST 579 / NRSM 579

Available every semester – fall, spring, and summer
Time and location to be determined

Matthew McKinney, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy
Chair, Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Program
406-459-5166
matthew.mckinney@umontana.edu

This three-credit practicum is designed as the capstone experience of the *Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Program* (NRCR Program). It provides students practical experience in collaboration, facilitation, and conflict resolution. More specifically, it allows students to develop and refine skills in one or more of the learning objectives and expected competencies of the program.

The practicum requires students to work with citizens, stakeholders, and decision-makers on a current natural resource or environmental issue. Students spend most of their time interacting with these people, complementing this hands-on work with relevant reading in history, science, policy, law, and governance. The products of a practicum may include convening community dialogues, facilitating multiparty meetings, making presentations at professional meetings, and producing policy reports and articles for professional journals.

Students may design their own practicum in consultation with the Chair of the NRCR Program or participate in projects organized and convened by the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy (CNREP). Individual projects may be conducted year-round. The focus of the projects organized by CNREP change each year, but typically focus on a geographical area where numerous natural resource and environmental issues converge.

The practicum is available to students that are enrolled in the NRCR Program and have completed *Natural Resources Conflict Resolution* and *Environmental Negotiation and Mediation*. In rare cases, students who do not meet these prerequisites may be allowed to participate in the practicum.

Although it is a required part of the NRCR Program, some students have completed more than one practicum and use the credits as electives

REQUIREMENTS

1 – *Complete the Required Reading* - Before initiating and designing a practicum, students complete the following readings

1. Alex Conley and Ann Moote, *Collaborative Conservation in Theory and Practice: A Literature Review* (Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy 2001): 34 pages ... this is more of a background resource than anything.
2. John S. Hammond, et al., *Smart Choices: A Practical Guide to Making Better Decisions* (Harvard Business School Press 1999): 1-14.
3. David Brooks, "The Unifying Leader," *New York Times* (November 24, 2014): 3 pages.
4. David Chrislip, et al., "Skills for a New Kind of Leadership," *Collaborative Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 1994): 127-146.
5. Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, & John Kania, *The Dawn of System Leadership* (Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2015): 9 pages.
6. Ronald Heifetz, et al., *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Harvard Business Press 2009): 28 pages.

2 – *Prepare a Work Plan* – After completing the required readings and discussing practicum opportunities and possibilities with the instructor, each student shall prepare a work plan/memorandum to explain the following:

- A. **Purpose/Scope of Work** – In one or two sentences, explain the purpose and scope of your practicum.
- B. **Audience/Client** – Who is your audience or client? Why do they care about this project? How will it benefit them?
- C. **Objectives, Tasks, Deliverables, and Schedule** – This is the meat of your work plan! Clearly articulate each objective for the proposed scope of work, followed by an itemization of the methods you will use to achieve the objective and the deliverable for each objective. Include a schedule to achieve all of the tasks and deliverables.
- D. **Skill-building and Learning Objectives** – Using the "learning objectives" explained in this syllabus, identify which knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) you intend to develop, refine, and improve through this practicum. Be explicit. You do not have to develop, refine, and improve every one of the learning objectives; identify and highlight the most relevant KSA's given your proposed work plan.

The work plan should be no longer than it needs to be – typically 2-4 pages. The instructor expects that you will share and discuss one or more drafts of the work plan.

Once you and the instructor are comfortable with the work plan, you will organize a meeting (either face-to-face or virtual) with the client and instructor to review the work plan. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that everyone is on the same page in terms of objectives, tasks, deliverables, schedule, and so on. During this meeting, the participants will also discuss the need and value of meeting one or more times during the practicum to discuss progress, problems, and so on.

If you would like to see one or more sample work plans, please ask the instructor.

3 – Complete the Practicum

4 – Engage in Peer-to-Peer Learning - In any given semester, students engaged in a practicum meet on a regular basis to discuss progress, problems, and lessons learned. We will also use a variety of exercises to test, develop, and refine collaborative capacities.

5 – Prepare a Final Report – Once the practicum is completed, each student shall prepare and submit a professional memo that explains the tasks and activities, deliverables and/or outcomes, and lessons learned according to each of the learning objectives and core competencies identified in the work plan.

SELECTED PRACTICUM PROJECTS

- Co-facilitate Marshall Woods Restoration Project, US Forest Service (2015)
- Assess Economic Opportunities in the Blackfoot River Watershed, Blackfoot Challenge (2015)
- Map Watershed Groups and Governance in the Columbia River Basin (2014/2015)
- Co-facilitate Missoula Growth Policy (2014/2015)
- Co-facilitate Clark Fork Water Management Plan, State Water Planning Process, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (2014)
- Co-facilitate Public Land Private Wildlife Council, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (2014)
- Large Landscape Conservation in the Rocky Mountain West (2014)
- Community Participation in Biosphere Reserve Management, Northern India (2014)
- Local Food Partnerships, St. Patrick's Hospital, Missoula (2014)
- Co-facilitate, BLM Western Oregon Plan Revision (2014)
- Scientific Summit on Brucellosis in Yellowstone National Park (2013)
- Climate Adaptation Strategy, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (2013)
- Lolo Watershed Group (2013)

- Practitioners' Network on Large Landscape Conservation (2012-2013)
- Collaborative Strategies to Integrate Land and Water Decisions (2013)
- Exporting Montana Forest Products (2012)
- Community-based Conservation in Mongolia (2012)
- Improving the Montana Environmental Policy Act (2012)
- Building the Capacity of Legislators to Work Together (2012)
- Water in the US American West – 6th World Water Forum (2012)
- Managing Drought in the Clark Fork River Basin (2012)
- Collaborative Conservation in Northeast Montana: Making Room for Bison (2012)
- Community-building in Ecuador (2011)
- Mediation Practice, Missoula Community Dispute Resolution Center (2011-2013)
- Mapping Large Landscape Conservation Initiatives in the Rocky Mountains (2011)
- An Assessment of the Heavy Haul Issue (2011)
- Implementing Tribal Treaty Rights on National Forests (2011)
- Joint Fact Finding for Mountain Pine Beetle (2010)
- Large Landscape Conservation: An Atlas of the Rocky Mountain Region (2010)
- Public Participation for the USFS Planning Rule, Region 1 (2010)
- Land Use, Growth, and the Future of the Bitterroot Valley (2009)
- Climate Change Dialogue with Scientists and the Faith Community (2009)
- Missoula Community Dispute Resolution Center (2009-2012)
- Managing Transboundary Natural Resources: An Assessment of the Need to Revise and Update the Columbia River Treaty (2008)
- Creating the Future of the Ninemile Valley: An Exploratory Assessment (2007)
- Travel Management Plan, Gallatin National Forest (2007)
- Flathead Indian Reservation Food and Fitness Coalition (2006)
- Regional Collaboration in the Crown of the Continent (2006)
- Sustaining Montana's Working Landscapes (2006)
- Stream Access in Montana (2006)
- Public Participation in Superfund Cleanup in Idaho (2005)
- International Environmental Conflict Resolution (2005)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The NRCR Program is designed to build and refine the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to prevent and resolve natural resources conflicts. It integrates theory, methods, and practice, and is organized around five core competencies.

Analytical Competency

The process of preventing and resolving natural resource conflicts revolves around multiple parties, interests, and values; complex issues; incomplete information and knowledge; and multiple approaches to engaging stakeholders, building agreements, and resolving conflicts. Analytical competencies help interested parties and process managers make sense of complex issues; manage information to solve problems; and design, manage, and adapt effective processes. More specific knowledge, skills, and abilities include:

History of Conflict Resolution Theory and Methods – Appreciate the history of alternative approaches to govern natural resources, engage citizens in public decisions, and resolve natural resource and environmental conflicts.

Stakeholder Analysis - Identify stakeholders and key issues; map the interests and concerns of stakeholders, including decision-makers; clarify options for citizen participation and public dispute resolution; and determine if and when collaboration, consensus building, or conflict resolution is appropriate.

Social, Political, Legal, & Institutional Context – Analyze these contextual variables to clarify incentives and/or constraints to collaboration and conflict resolution; analyze the implications for public officials, public participation, delegation of authority, and disclosure and liability.

Decision Analysis for Negotiation and Agreement Seeking – Use analytical and strategic thinking to more clearly and explicitly define problems, generate creative options, evaluate the consequences and trade-offs of options, and maximize mutual gains.

Measuring Outcomes & Impacts of Conflict Resolution Processes – Apply alternative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of collaboration and other approaches to shape public policy and resolve natural resource disputes; develop evaluation criteria and indicators of success, including both process and outcome metrics.

Applications — Adapt principles and strategies to public participation, community-based collaboration, partnerships, networks, administrative rulemaking, environmental impact assessment, resource planning, legislative policymaking, multi-jurisdictional issues, inter-agency coordination, court-connected disputes, intractable disputes, dispute systems design, collaborative governance, and international environmental issues.

Process Competency

Collaboration and conflict resolution are, by definition, processes that engage people in face-to-face dialogue and deliberation. People with diverse interests and perspectives come

together and learn about each other and the issues at hand. They engage in formal negotiation and informal conversation. This process of engagement requires competency in communication, process design, teamwork, and negotiation. Through these competencies, interested parties and process managers jointly create the conditions required to build trust, facilitate communication, and seek understanding and agreement.

Communication – This skill set includes active listening, presenting ideas and information, and persuading or influencing others; use different communication modes and media to reach different audiences; be sensitive with cross-cultural communication.

Process Design — Design public processes that are inclusive, informed, and deliberative. Tailor the process to meet the needs and interests of stakeholders, and in a way that respects legal, political, biological, and other constraints

Teamwork – This critical skill set includes competency in managing group dynamics; building coalitions; working effectively in teams with diverse interests, knowledge, and skills; and communicating within internal teams and in multiparty forums.

Negotiation — Participate effectively in multi-party public processes; work with others to find mutual gain solutions; create and claim value; sequence issues; package options; and manage communication between representatives and their constituent groups.

Leadership and Management Competency

Natural resource conflict resolution, particularly through collaborative processes, requires special leadership and management competence to motivate and guide people. All interested participants are leaders in their own right, representing different jurisdictions or constituencies, interests, and perspectives – as well as drawing on their own power and authority. Working across legal, institutional, cultural, knowledge, and other boundaries likewise requires a special type of “facilitative” or “collaborative” leadership.

Leadership Roles – Appreciate the different types of leadership needed in collaboration and conflict resolution – sponsors, conveners, facilitators, participants, experts, others. Distinguish roles and responsibilities. Avoid conflicts of interest.

Collaborative Leadership — Enable people with different viewpoints to accomplish a task that none of them could accomplish individually; lead as a peer, not a superior; encourage and facilitate cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; foster commitment and team spirit; work with others to achieve common goals and realize a sense of shared accomplishment; manage and resolve conflicts in a constructive manner; and manage effective meetings.

Political & Entrepreneurial Skills – Inspire new ways of thinking, new perspectives on problems, and new approaches to shared decision making. Develop the power of persuasion, ability to instill confidence and trust, and sensitivity to timing and flexibility of the decision-making arena to help other people overcome fear and resistance.

Facilitation and Mediation - Understand the value of impartial, nonpartisan facilitators and mediators in complex, multi-party natural resources issues. Develop a working knowledge of the role of process managers in assessing situations, designing the right process, facilitating meetings, mediating disputes, drafting documents, and monitoring implementation. Know when a facilitator or mediator is needed, what to look for in a qualified process manager, and how to select such a person or team.

Knowledge Management Competency

Managing knowledge – its generation, translation, and distribution – is critical to prevent and resolve natural resource conflicts. This skill set begins with the process of assembling all available information relevant to the problem or opportunity at hand, and then extends to assessing what participants know, don't know, and need to know to make informed decisions. It includes integrating scientific and technical information, along with culturally significant and local relevant information. These objectives may be enhanced through the use of information and communication technology.

Joint Fact Finding – Assess information requirements for informed decision-making; embrace different ways of knowing and learning; apply joint fact-finding methods and standards to collect, analyze, and synthesize information; help people with diverse viewpoints build a common understanding of complex issues and resolve scientific and technical disputes.

Role of Experts – Clarify the role of scientific experts and technical information in providing baseline information, generating options, evaluating trade-offs, and invigorating the process of agreement building and dispute resolution.

Adaptive Management – Employ the principles and strategies of adaptive management during a collaborative or other conflict resolution process (i.e., adapt the process as needed), as well as during the process of implementation – as new ideas, information, and stakeholders emerge and other relevant variables change.

Information and Communication Technology – Appreciate the value of computer-based decision support and spatial analysis tools, along with web-based communications & social networking tools. Understand the merits of computing and communication technology in preventing and resolving natural resource conflicts.

Professional Accountability Competency

Engaging in negotiation, collaboration, and consensus-seeking processes to build agreement and resolve conflicts on natural resource issues implies a certain type of professional integrity and accountability (i.e., ethics) – one that places a premium on participating in good faith, being open and transparent, following-through on your commitments, and – in the case of process managers – separating personal values from the issues under consideration.

Code of Professional Conduct – Familiar with one or more “codes of professional conduct” related to the field of collaboration and conflict resolution – e.g., Association for Conflict Resolution, International Association for Public Participation, International Association of Facilitators.

Personal & Professional Development – Reflect on personal and professional effectiveness and seek feedback.