

Issue-Based Multi-Party Negotiation Training

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

2008

Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma

Background

In partnership with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution, the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution delivered a one-day multi-party negotiation workshop for the Office of Surface Mining and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The training was based on a real-life conflict among the two agencies, the coal mining industry, and various state agencies over mining activities and the protection and conservation of endangered bat species and critical habitat. The U.S. Institute adapted the issues surrounding the conflict into a scenario that gave the participants the opportunity to role play and develop their negotiation skills during the training to work through the conflict.

Using the scenario, the training focused on:

- The preparation needed to negotiate, especially in multi-party situations.
- The skills necessary to forge relationships to build trust.
- How multi-party negotiation can, at the same time, be more complex and more flexible than two-party negotiation
- Problem solving techniques for managing the inevitable conflicts that arise in complex conflicts.
- The principles of agency engagement that the U.S. Institute uses when facilitating or engaging in collaborative processes



Highlights/Innovation

- Emphasis on relating the training to real-world negotiation

Participant take-aways:

- *“Learning to recognize potential allies based on similar or overlapping interests”*
- *“The importance of accurately identifying and assessing the interests/positions of all parties to a negotiation”*
- *“Preparation for negotiation is critical”*
- *“I will sort out my needs v. wants more completely ahead of time”*
- *“What I take away from this training/workshop will have a positive impact on my effectiveness in the future.”*

Credits

Partner from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution

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