

## **Federal Agency Environmental Facilitator Project**

### **Overview and Definitions**

The Federal Environmental Facilitator Project is an inter-agency effort to develop lists of internal agency personnel with facilitation and mediation training and experience who are willing to be on call for short collateral duty facilitation assignments. Individual agencies develop internal lists of qualified individuals and share those lists with other agencies that may need additional capacity for facilitation.

Examples of projects in which the facilitators could work include:

- Facilitation of small groups or table discussions at summits, workshops, and other consensus building meetings.
- Planning and facilitation of selected public meetings that agencies may sponsor.
- Internal work group and team meetings.

All assignments are expected to be short term and involve multi-party, environmental, natural resources or other public issue subject matter. The focus of this Project is environmental, however, some agencies may opt to include additional subject areas. Time commitments for assignments will vary depending on the length of the event and if any pre- and post-event work is required. It is expected that a facilitator's time commitment for a specific project will be discussed in advance and will be at the discretion of the supervisor in consultation with the employee. It is also anticipated that in most instances the requesting organization will pay travel expenses, if any, of the facilitators.

### **Participating Agencies**

US Dept. of Interior, Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution

US Environmental Protection Agency, Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center

US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources

US Dept. of Defense, ADR office

US Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service (ag mediation program also?)

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

### **Process for Facilitator List**

- Application form: all agencies use the uniform questionnaire (attached)
  - Applicants indicate their skills and experience on the application form. In general, participants in the Federal Environmental Facilitator Project will need to demonstrate prior training and experience with facilitation and/or mediation.
  - Supervisor authorizes applicant to perform the collateral duty by signing the Supervisor's Endorsement form.

- Contact at each agency manages application process, qualification process, and list development and sharing

### **Supporting Agency**

The US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution provides support to the interagency working group developing and managing this project.

### **Definitions**

**Collateral Duty** – Activity is considered a regular work duty.

**Facilitation** – A process in which an impartial third-party assists a group of individuals to discuss constructively a number of complex, potentially controversial issues. The facilitator typically works with participants before and during these discussions to determine the objectives of the process, help develop an effective agenda, enforce ground rules, assist parties in communicating effectively, and help the participants keep on track as they work toward their goals. While facilitation bears many similarities to mediation, the facilitator is primarily charged with fostering communication among parties, rather than assisting them in reaching a resolution or agreement.

**Impartial Third-party** – One who has no stake in the outcome of a facilitated process and who can credibly assist all involved in an equitable manner.

**Lead Mediator/Facilitator** - The primary facilitator or mediator on a team who is responsible for working with the meeting sponsor on the final design of a process and for ensuring that the process accomplishes its goals. The role of the Lead Facilitator usually involves coordinating and guiding a team of other facilitators or mediators.

**Mediation** – A negotiation in which an impartial third party assists negotiations between parties to a dispute by improving communication, identifying interests, and exploring possibilities for mutually agreeable resolution. The mediator does not impose a solution (unlike arbitration), but rather helps parties reach their own agreement.

**Situation Assessment** - A conflict or situation assessment, usually conducted by an independent and impartial process expert, provides parties in conflict with an objective determination of whether and how they might work together to solve their shared or interdependent problems. An assessment is generally based on confidential conversations with people who have an interest or stake in the situation and can include recommendations for how to move forward in an assisted negotiation or collaborative process.

**Stakeholder** – Representative of a constituency or an individual affected by a situation or decision. They have a "stake" in the outcome of a future governmental decision and/or thus are involved in the process to resolve the situation or conflict.