

Practicum in Collaborative Conservation

NRSM 579 | ENST 579

Available Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters upon Instructor Approval

Instructors

Shawn Johnson

Director, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy
Chair, Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Program
shawn.johnson@umontana.edu

Nick Maya

Project Coordinator, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy
Instructor, Natural Resources Conflict Resolution Program
nicholas.maya@umontana.edu

Summary

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

The practicum requires students to work at least 135 hours with citizens, stakeholders, and decision-makers on a current natural resource or environmental issue. Students spend most of their time interacting with people, complementing hands-on work with relevant reading in history, science, policy, law, and governance. The activities and products of a practicum may include convening community dialogues, facilitating multiparty meetings, making presentations at professional meetings, and producing policy reports and articles for organizations, conferences, blogs, and/or professional journals.

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

The practicum is available to students who are enrolled in the NRCR Program and have completed *Natural Resources Conflict Resolution* and *Collaborative Skills for Natural Resource Leaders*. Some students have completed more than one practicum and use the extra credits as electives.

Recommended Background Reading

Before initiating and designing a practicum, students should be familiar with the place of collaborative conservation in the history of ideas, institutions, and approaches to natural resources policy, governance, and conflict resolution. Given the diverse sources that have generated these unique ideas and institutions, a considerable amount of reading is necessary before the bits and pieces begin to fall together. Completing Natural Resources Conflict Resolution (LAW 613) provides an excellent foundation to understand the place of collaborative conservation. The following materials should broaden and deepen your knowledge of collaborative conservation and related theories, methods, and case studies (these will be made available on UM Box for the semester).

Collaborative Conservation

- Philip Brick, Donald Snow, and Sarah Van De Wetering, *Across the Great Divide: Explorations in Collaborative Conservation in the American West* (Island Press 2001).
- Alex Conley and Ann Moote, *Collaborative Conservation in Theory and Practice: A Literature Review* (Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy 2001): 34 pages.
- Ronald D. Brunner, et al., eds., *Finding Common Ground: Governance and Natural Resources in the American West* (Yale University Press 2002).
- Susan Charnley, et al., eds., *Stitching the West Back Together: Conservation of Working Landscapes* (University of Chicago Press 2014).

Collaborative Governance

- E. Franklin Dukes, et al., *Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates* (University of Virginia 2001).
- John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Good Books 2003).
- Kirk Emerson and Tina Nabatchi, *Collaborative Governance Regimes* (Georgetown University Press 2015).

Collaborative Leadership

- David Chrislip, et al., "Skills for a New Kind of Leadership," *Collaborative Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 1994): 127-146.
- Ronald Heifetz, et al., *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Harvard Business Press 2009): 28 pages.
- David Brooks, "The Unifying Leader," *New York Times* (November 24, 2014): 3 pages.
- Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, & John Kania, *The Dawn of System Leadership* (Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2015): 9 pages.
- Matthew McKinney, "Codes of Professional Conduct," in *The Role of Facilitators and Mediators* (2012).

- John S. Hammond, et al., *Smart Choices: A Practical Guide to Making Better Decisions* (Harvard Business School Press 1999): 1-14.
- Lawrence Susskind, et al., *Better Environmental Policy Studies: How to Design and Conduct More Effective Analyses* (Island Press 2001).

Designing a Practicum Project and Preparing a Work Plan

After reviewing the readings and discussing practicum opportunities and possibilities with the instructor, each student shall prepare a work plan/memorandum to explain the following:

- **Purpose/Scope of Work** – In one or two sentences, explain the purpose and scope of your practicum.
- **Audience/Client** – Who is your audience or client? Why do they care about this project? How will it benefit them?
- **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 the tasks and deliverables. Include both a narrative and table that estimates the number of hours for each task and deliverable.
- **Skill-building and Learning Objectives** – Using the competencies provided in this syllabus and your own learning objectives and interests, 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 them; identify and highlight the most relevant KSA's given your proposed work plan.

The work plan/memorandum includes two documents: (1) a brief narrative that describes the four elements listed above; and (2) a spreadsheet that articulates the tasks, activities, deliverables, and schedule to complete the practicum. **There are templates and examples of these documents provided on Box.** The memorandum should be no longer than it needs to be – typically 2-4 pages.

The work plan/memorandum will be produced in consultation with the host organization/client and the instructor. This typically takes 2-3 joint meetings to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to provide input and seek agreement on the objectives, tasks, deliverables, and anticipated schedule of the practicum.

Implementing the Practicum Project

During the process of completing the practicum, students should maintain regular contact with practicum instructors via telephone calls, emails, and brief updates. Students and the instructors

should agree on how best to communicate and coordinate throughout the practicum to ensure successful outcomes for the project and for the student's learning objectives.

Engaging in Peer Learning and Exchange

In addition to working on a practicum project, students in the practicum meet on a weekly basis to discuss progress, challenges, successes, and lessons learned. We will also identify topics of shared interest to explore throughout the semester in order to better refine and deepen our understanding of various dimensions of collaborative ability and capacity. On occasion, we may also invite guest speakers to join us.

Preparing a Final Memo and Presentation

Once the practicum is completed, each student will prepare and submit a professional memo that describes the tasks and activities completed, deliverables and/or outcomes of the practicum, and lessons learned according to each of the learning objectives and core competencies identified in the work plan. The final memo should also refer to appropriate literature in natural resources policy and conflict resolution and how the practicum builds on, reinforces, and/or broadens our understanding of the history, theory, and practice of collaborative conservation. Any and all supporting materials should be submitted with the final memorandum.

In order to share insights, observations, and lessons with the broader NRCR community, each student will prepare a class presentation that highlights key elements of the final memo/practicum experience.

Completing an Exit Interview

Once the practicum is completed, each student should organize a meeting with the host organization/client and the faculty advisor to discuss the experience, review progress on learning objectives, identify insights and lessons learned about collaborative conservation, and suggest ways to improve future practicum projects.

PAST STUDENT PRACTICUM PROJECTS

- Facilitating the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group, National Forest Foundation Conservation Connect Fellowship (2022)
- Desert Tortoise Transportation Ecology Task Force, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Center for Large Landscape Conservation (2021)
- Stakeholder Analysis of Working Lands Conservation in the Northern Rockies, Wildlife Conservation Society (2021)
- Conducting a Situation Assessment for Understanding Potential Growth of Human-Carnivore Conflict Prevention Services in Northwestern Montana, People & Carnivores (2021)
- Facilitating a Landscape Conservation Design Process for the High Divide, Heart of the Rockies Initiative (2021)
- Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands, Intermountain West Joint Venture (2021)
- Resource and Knowledge-sharing for Enhancing the Integrated Weed Management Program in the Great Burn Proposed Wilderness, Great Burn Conservation Association (2021)
- Advancing Collaborative Conservation Portfolio
- Sustaining Community-based Collaboration after 25-Years: The Case of the Blackfoot Challenge (2019)
- Co-facilitate Montana Wildlife and Transportation Summit, Montana Departments of Transportation and Fish, Wildlife and Parks (2019)
- Integrating Land and Water Management: The Role of Community-based Collaboration, Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy (2019)
- Co-facilitate High Divide Collaborative Workshop, Heart of the Rockies (2018 and 2019)
- Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Indian Country, Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (2018-2019)
- Building the Capacity of Tribes and First Nations to Participate in the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent (2018 and 2019)
- Beaver Management, National Wildlife Federation (2018-2019)
- Shaping the Future of the Teton River: A Stakeholder Assessment on the Merits of Creating a River Recreation Plan, Friends of the Teton River (2018-2019)
- Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Plan, City of Missoula, Department of Parks and Recreation (2018)
- Salmon-Challis Forest Plan Update, Salmon Valley Stewardship (2017/2018)
- High Divide Collaborative, Heart of the Rockies (2018)
- One River, Ethics Matter: Western Montana – 5th Annual International Ethics Conference on the Past, Present, & Future of the Columbia River (2017/2018)
- Capacity Building Assessment, Montana Watershed Coordinating Council (2017/2018)
- Blackfoot Swan Landscape Restoration/Joint Fact-Finding Project (2017)
- Turupu Coastal Water Management Project, Solomon Islands (2017)
- Northwestern Energy's Missoula Solar Power Working Group (2017)
- Historical Zoning Collaborative, Community and Planning Services, Missoula County (2017)
- Understanding Montana's Potential for Participation in Voluntary Carbon Offset Markets,

- The Nature Conservancy (2017)
- Public Participation and Collaborative Problem Solving on the Custer-Gallatin National Forest (2016/2017)
 - Human-Wildlife Conflict Reduction, Blackfoot Challenge (2016/2017)
 - Participatory Mapping & Assessment of Amerindian Resource Use in the South Rupununi and Kanuku Mountains Protected Area, Guyana
 - Collaborative Leadership in the Crown of the Continent, Crown Managers' Partnership and Roundtable on (2016/2017) the Crown of the Continent (2016/2017)
 - Bitterroot River Recreation Management Plan, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (2016/2017)
 - Developing Resource Use Agreements in Guyana Protected Areas: Strategies for Community Engagement and Implementation (2016)
 - Options for Public Engagement and Collaboration in Parks and Protected Area Management in Chile (2016)
 - Facilitative Leadership and Collaborative Conservation, National Forest Foundation (2016 - 2019)
 - Forging a Transboundary River Basin Entity in the Columbia River Basin: The Role of Tribes, First Nations, Other Sovereigns, and Stakeholders (2016)
 - The Viability of Community-based Collaboration in the Kootenai River Watershed (2016)
 - Developing a Collaborative Drought Management Plan for the Upper Clark Fork River Basin (2016)
 - Collaborative Planning for Big Sky Wastewater Treatment Facility (2016)
 - Wildlife Connectivity and Collaborative Leadership in the Crown of the Continent (2016)
 - Building a Constituency for Change in the Great Burn Wilderness Study Area (2016)
 - 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) Ø
Mapping Large Landscape Conservation Initiatives in the Rocky Mountains (2011) Ø 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) Ø Regional Collaboration in
the Crown of the Continent (2006) Ø 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.

In addition to the competencies below, students and instructors may identify other learning objectives, capacities, skills, and needs to support collaborative conservation outcomes.

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.