

Stephen T. Mather Training Center
Improving NPS Team Capacity to Analyze and Transform
Stakeholder Conflict in Park Management

Does destructive conflict get in the way of reaching your wildlife and park management goals? Does stakeholder resistance to or antagonism toward NPS or park management actions frustrate your efforts? Do you find it hard to create positive progress in an environment that seems to resist change? Are you struggling to reach consensus on decisions affecting diverse people or groups? Do you work with people with whom you have a difficult relationship? Do you wish the path forward could be a little easier, a little clearer?

If so, you and your team have a unique opportunity to work with a conservation conflict transformation specialist from the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration (HWCC) to develop skills to help untangle the complexity and conflict in your park management efforts. One park team will be chosen to participate in a new series of facilitated interactive webinars to learn to apply the fundamentals of Conservation Conflict Transformation (CCT) and receive consultation on how to transform an ongoing conflict. Since 2006 HWCC has worked with over 900 stakeholders and practitioners transforming conflict in natural resource and wildlife conservation, on cases ranging from predator conservation and management across jurisdictions, to park-neighboring community relations, to invasive species management, to community involvement in multiple-use interests of protected areas. By analyzing and addressing the more elusive and deep-rooted social side of conflict through conservation conflict transformation, diverse stakeholders become more receptive to conservation and park goals, polarization of conflict decreases, shared common ground is identified and built upon, hostile relationships are reconciled, and commitments to positive change and shared solutions are genuine and on-going.

NPS is often involved in conflicts between people about natural resources, wildlife and park management actions. This interactive online series will provide participants with an orientation to the analytical skills needed to recognize and address the underlying drivers of conflict, exposure to several fundamental principles and processes for transforming complex social conflicts, and development of preliminary strategic “next steps” for creating positive change for their park and surrounding community around a specific conflict.

Training Objectives:

At the conclusion of the course, learners should be able to do the following:

- Apply the theory and practice of conservation conflict transformation to their daily work
- Identify the suite of hidden drivers of conflict, in the park’s conservation context
- Apply the basics of process design to park natural resource conflicts
- Work more supportively and effectively together post-training to prevent and address internal and external conflict
- Develop a “next steps” strategy for a specific conflict relevant to the participants’ park

Applicants: This significantly reduced-fee online capacity building and strategic guidance series is available through a competitive process to one park-based team that must be composed of a diversity of staff, including those working at senior, mid-level and field-based levels and must represent an appropriate range of divisions (e.g., natural resource management, interpretation, law enforcement, facilities). The team will address a conflict or challenging decision-making effort of their choosing. The entire team must commit to the pre-workshop work, the two structured sessions and to the work done by their team between sessions. Park teams that do not have diverse representation will not be eligible.

Dates: Pre-workshop case analysis and two structured 3.5-hour facilitated interactive webinars with four hours of team homework in February 2015 at times convenient to the team and instructor

Class Size: One park team of 8-12 individuals representing a diversity of leadership, staff, and work groups

Location: interactive online

Tuition Cost: \$250 per person (this is an \$18,000 value, co-sponsored by HWCC and NPS BRMD)

Application: Interested park teams should jointly prepare an application describing the case they wish to examine, stakeholders, history of conflict, and what is preventing progress. Please go to <http://www.nps.gov/training/nrs/events/events.html> to download an application. Instructions are on the application. Applications **must** be returned by **COB January 16, 2015**.

Testimonials from HWCC in-person capacity-building workshops:

"I wish I had this training thirty years ago! Thank you so much. It was terrific. I learned more than I can say." – Marshall Jones, Senior Conservation Advisor, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and former Deputy Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service

What a great experience! I feel privileged to have been able to attend this workshop, and learn from Francine. I believe that this workshop has positively and permanently changed the way I will work with people and deal with conflicts. The entire workshop was well done. I don't remember the last time I was so interested and excited to learn. The group of people was phenomenal, and led to great discussions. Francine's experience and expertise was incredible, and she was a wonderful and motivating teacher. The process design helped to create a trusting environment between the participants. Both the content and the execution of the workshop was way beyond what I had expected coming into it." – *Caitlin Lee-Roney, Yosemite National Park, National Park Service*

"The HWCC conservation conflict transformation workshop has truly changed my perception of conflict. I now feel empowered in these conflict situations, whereas before I felt frustrated and overwhelmed. With this training, I now have the tools and confidence to meet my conservation goals." – *Katie Gilles, Bat Conservation International*

"I heard all sorts of great things about this workshop, so I figured it would be reasonably good. I read somewhat skeptically how one previous participant wished the workshop were longer. Sure enough, by the last day, I was sad it was ending and would have been really happy had it lasted at least a few more days! The National Park Service does a lot of good things, but we could do a lot more good things a lot better if more NPS employees had and used the skills this workshop teaches. This is a really great and useful training and I can't wait to see what I can accomplish using these skills." – *Jeffrey Trust, Yosemite National Park, US National Park Service*

"This is the best training that I've ever taken in my career! I think that anyone who feels that it's a lot of money should do some rethinking. This is the very best investment that any wildlife agency or organization can make in their employees and their effectiveness. I can't wait for the opportunity to put these principles, skills and processes into my human-wildlife management practices!" – *Rebecca Christoffel, Iowa State University, Wildlife Extension Officer*

"I was skeptical of this course because the state agency I work for volunteered me to go, and I thought this was going to be just another conflict resolution course. But afterward, I felt empowered to work through complex social issues and positively change long-standing wildlife-related conflicts within my programs. However, I wish more than just two employees from my organization could have attended; collaborative internal teamwork could then affirm our agency's role of leading conservation efforts by systematically transforming human-wildlife conflicts into conservation opportunities." – *Marc Kenyon, California Fish and Wildlife Agency*

"This training has helped me to better understand deep-rooted conflicts, to identify their symptoms, and to anticipate their impact on conservation projects. Specifically, deep-rooted conflicts often simmer between Tribes and State conservation agencies. While open disputes are rare, they can ignite quickly given a sensitive topic or callous approach. Cooperation between these organizations requires an extended, iterative process that develops trust, builds on common ground, and considers the myriad of socio-cultural, political, and historical trends influencing each stakeholder. My ability to identify sensitive topics, build frameworks for collaboration, and appreciate the time necessary to progress is all based upon HWCC's training." – *Cyrus Hester, Project Coordinator for the Bad River Band of Chippewa Indians*

Conservation successes reported by managers trained in HWCC's approach:

The Problem	The Resulting Change
<p>Conservation and government stakeholders in mountain lion conflict in California were entrenched in a decades-long cycle of conflict around mountain lion management, characterized by distrust, a lack of communication and information sharing, and costly tactics to influence “the other side” including use of the media, legal actions, etc. Proposed legislation that would result in less lethal control of mountain lions was initially met with opposition by some, support by others.</p>	<p>Stakeholders now work well together both informally and through a new mechanism for engagement they created that supports improved wildlife response, as well as on-going relationship and decision-making. They share information openly and willingly and report that they make better decisions both collectively and as individual organizations. The government agency reversed its opposition to the proposed legislation change and supported the new bill, which was signed into law within 5 months of the intervention. Their sphere of work together has expanded to address a wide array of wildlife management issues and their improved capacity and relationships has impacted other government institutions and fostered the adoption of similar wildlife response mechanisms in other parts of the state. Diverse views are now welcome and legal and media tactics are no longer the go-to means to influence or pressure the “other side.”</p>
<p>Community members destroyed a fence around a national park designed to keep wildlife out of the community gardens/farms. The community were angry at the park for a variety of reasons, including the park’s process for creating and erecting the fence</p>	<p>Community members agreed to work with the park to rebuild the fence together.</p>
<p>Staff of a US-based wildlife conservation organization blamed staff of a US government agency for over-use of lethal control of wolves and for actions that prevented ranchers from engaging in non-lethal control of wolves to manage and prevent HWC on their ranches.</p>	<p>The US government agency developed creative strategies to improve uptake of non-lethal control measures by ranchers and offered ways for their agency, the only government agency or NGO that is respected by ranchers in many parts of the Western US, to use their positive relationships with ranchers to facilitate these actions.</p>
<p>Fishermen in Bahamas were over-fishing a threatened conch species (queen conch) and were antagonistic to the scientific evidence presented by government and NGO authorities that demonstrated this fact. No one wanted to reduce their own rate of harvest, while others continued at previous harvest rates.</p>	<p>Fishermen proposed “no fishing” zones to facilitate the recovery of the threatened conch species and to ensure sustainable fishing practices.</p>
<p>30 years of conflict (war, encroachment, development and human-wildlife conflict) prevented elephants from migrating from Uganda into South Sudan</p>	<p>6 months into a CCT process with the communities living along the ancient migratory route between northern Uganda and South Sudan, the first herd of elephants succeeded in completing their migration.</p>