



Mark Xavier Jacobs

mjacobs@merid.org • Work +1-202-354-6446 • Fax +1-202-354-6441

1920 L Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036, United States

Summary

Mark X. Jacobs joined Meridian Institute as a mediator in January, 2008. Mark has worked on environmental policy for more than ten years, as a consensus- and coalition- builder in faith communities, as an advocate and organizer, and as a university instructor.

Mark played a leadership role in engaging American faith communities to address environmental issues. He served as the Founding Executive Director of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) from 1994 to 2003. Under his leadership, COEJL grew from a short-term project of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment into a permanent coalition of 29 national Jewish agencies with affiliated institutions across North America. In addition to his organizational leadership, Mark is the author of many articles, chapters, and educational materials on Judaism and the environment. He has an MA in International Relations and Graduate Certificate in Development Studies from Yale University, and a BA in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Meridian Experience

Meridian Institute, Washington, DC, January 2008–Present

Meridian Institute designs and facilitates collaborative processes that help diverse parties identify critical issues, build relationships and trust, construct innovative solutions, and implement durable decisions. The collaborative processes address challenges at the local, state, national, and international levels, and involve leaders from government agencies, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions. Meridian also assists organizations in conducting strategy development and planning.

Mediator

Manage and facilitate policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects independently and with teams of facilitators. Conduct convening assessments, design processes, plan and facilitate meetings, help participants develop consensus documents, and conduct implementation activities. Projects include:

- U.S. Green Building Council (ongoing): assisted with planning and execution of a one-year strategic planning progress, and included interviewing stakeholders and staff, planning a retreat and other meetings, facilitating discussion among stakeholder groups; drafted and managed strategic plan text; supporting targeted efforts to implement the strategic plan and advance organizational excellence.
- Council on Sustainable Biomass Production (ongoing): facilitating meetings and work of groups addressing water and climate change issues; project management, strategy, and planning; manage drafting of sustainability standard for second generation biomass production.

Previous Experience

**University of Maryland,
Department of Government and Politics**
College Park, Maryland 2006–2007

*Graduate Assistant, Committee on Politics, Philosophy
and Public Policy*

*Instructor, Climate Change: Politics, Philosophy, and
Public Policy in Action*

Designed and taught interdisciplinary undergraduate course on climate change that included climate science, environmental ethics and philosophy, economics and public policy analysis, and international and domestic environmental politics.

**Coalition on the Environment and
Jewish Life (COEJL)**
New York, New York 1994–2003

Executive Director

Founding Executive Director of a national education, training, and advocacy organization comprised of a coalition of 29 national Jewish agencies and 13 regional affiliates and the Jewish member of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. Responsibilities included strategic planning, program development and planning, policy development, writing and publishing print and electronic materials, fundraising, developing partnerships with national environmental and religious organizations, conference planning, media relations, public speaking, supervising, budgeting, and administration.

Education

University of Maryland,
College Park, Maryland
Doctoral Student, Department of Government and
Politics 2006–2007

Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut
M.A., International Relations 2006
Graduate Certificate of Concentration in
Development Studies 2006

University of California,
Santa Cruz, California
B.A., Sociology
Phi Beta Kappa 1991

Selected Project Highlights

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is a rapidly growing organization whose mission is to dramatically increase the number of sustainable buildings and communities available to all people in the US and globally. The organization has over 15,000 organizations as members, over one hundred staff, and a very engaged and active Board. Meridian was responsible for conducting an in-depth issue mapping process to assess the external environment in which USGBC operates, analyzing and summarizing the results of that effort for Board and Senior Management, designing and facilitating a Board/Management Team retreat, drafting and finalizing the strategic plan and supporting the implementation of the plan and key strategic goals. The Meridian Team worked closely with a strategic planning committee comprised of staff and Board members to structure and implement the strategic planning process. The strategic plan was unanimously adopted by the Board and Meridian is now assisting with the development of metrics for tracking progress and facilitating targeted implementation activities to help follow through on the commitments made in the plan.

The Council on Sustainable Biomass Production (CSBP) is a multi-stakeholder group developing voluntary biomass to biofuel sustainability principles and standards for the production of feedstocks for second generation (cellulosic) refineries. CSBP's focus includes dedicated fuel crops, crop residues, purpose-grown wood, and forestry residues in North America. The principles and standards being developed are intended to reach the broadest land base possible by embracing the concept of continuous improvement. Fundamentally, the principles and standards will be economically practical and environmentally sound. The Council expects to develop a program over time that will provide for third party audit/certification. CSBP is pursuing a very rare opportunity to anticipate and address the environmental and social impacts of production of products that are not yet commercially viable. The intent is to create a sustainable production system from the very outset for this emergent industry.