



Diana K. Portner

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Summary

A Senior Mediator and Program Manager at Meridian Institute with experience in natural resource management and planning; facilitation of local and regional stakeholder meetings and federal advisory committees; and strategy development, consensus building, and problem-solving processes. Expertise in watershed, land, and forest management and planning, market-based approaches to conservation, climate change, and the socioeconomic dimensions of natural resource management. Experience working with governments, civil society, the private and nonprofit sectors, and researchers at the local, regional, and national levels. More than five years of on-the-ground experience in land management and ecological restoration of wetlands, prairies, and forest landscapes. Holds an M.S. in Natural Resources and Environment from the University of Michigan and a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in Psychology with a certificate in Environmental Studies. Currently serves on the Leadership Council of the Association for Conflict Resolution’s Environment and Public Policy section.

Meridian Experience

Meridian Institute

2013–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. These 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.

Senior Mediator and Program Manager

Manages and facilitates policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects involving teams of facilitators. Conducts convening assessments, designs processes, plans and facilitates meetings, helps participants develop consensus documents, and conducts implementation activities. Selected highlights are summarized below:

- Lead facilitator for the Alaska Roadless Rule Citizen Advisory Committee, which is charged with advising the State of Alaska on the future management of inventoried roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest. Over a two-month period, interviewed and assisted with the selection of committee members, convened three public meetings of the committee, coordinated the development of a final report of recommendations, and presented the final outcomes to Alaska Governor Bill Walker. Also assists with external communications, including the development of press releases and coordination of public comment and community events.
- Member of the Meridian team working to identify enabling conditions for increasing public and private investment in the mitigation of development-related impacts to rivers and streams in the Colorado River Basin. As part of the process, conducts interviews with experts in the field, co-facilitates annual convenings of the Colorado Stream Mitigation Summit, and manages consultant teams conducting research.
- Member of the Meridian team managing the Supply Chain Sustainability Research Fund, aimed at increasing the collective understanding of outcomes associated with market-based approaches to conservation, including corporate sustainability commitments, certification and standards, and finance sector strategies. Coordinates research teams, manages contracts, and facilitates calls and meetings with research teams, funders, and private-sector and NGO representatives.
- Member of the Meridian team exploring new approaches for improving company practices with regard to the marketing of breast-milk substitutes, with the aim of enhancing the nutrition and health of infants, young children, and mothers around the world. Assists with interviews, document development, and the planning, preparation, and facilitation of in-person meetings.
- Provided support for launching the Outdoor Engagement Partnership, a coalition of national organizations with a common commitment to catalyzing state-level investment to support conservation, environmental education, outdoor education, and recreation as key to positive health, educational, and social outcomes for children, youth, and families. Facilitated partnership meetings and calls, developed organizational documents, and supported strategic planning and issue prioritization.
- Facilitated trainings for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool (CREAT). Workshops involved water and wastewater utility operators, consultants, and state and federal agency representatives exploring adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of water and wastewater utilities to extreme weather events and long-term climate impacts.
- Member of the Meridian team that led a global author team and advisory committee in the development of the report, *Climate Change & Food Systems: Assessing Impacts and Opportunities*, and its accompanying resources, which sets forth a food systems perspective on climate mitigation and adaptation. Assisted with report development, including coordinating report content and graphic design.
- Please see <http://merid.org/Staff/dportner> for a full list of projects.

Previous Experience

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Petoskey, Michigan 2012–2013

Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator and Researcher

Designed a watershed management plan to be implemented by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Assessed current and future water conditions through field samples and geospatial modeling. Conducted and analyzed interviews and surveys and facilitated town hall meetings with residents, business owners, and local elected officials to solicit feedback. Managed participant outreach through education materials, print media, and interviews with local press. Coordinated and completed administrative tasks for a multi-disciplinary project team, including scheduling, meeting preparation, and drafting and circulating meeting minutes.

University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources and Environment

Ann Arbor, Michigan 2012

Graduate Student Instructor

Facilitated discussion and coordinated course preparation and individual meetings for 50 undergraduate students from multiple disciplines. Course content included environmental design, and cognitive, behavioral, and environmental psychology.

University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum

Ann Arbor, Michigan 2011–2013

Caretaker and University Engagement Program Assistant

Led biweekly volunteer workdays for up to 30 students and community members. Maintained active role in security of the Arboretum and educated visitors about its rules, history, and ecology. Performed trail maintenance, managed gardens, controlled invasive species, and assisted in prescribed burns. Coordinated and led student events, workshops, and tours.

Bitterroot Conservation Partnership

Hamilton, Montana 2012

Partnership Coordinator and Research Intern

Conducted a stakeholder assessment and issue analysis and developed recommendations for partnership development. Detailed a vision and organizational structure for the partnership. Planned and facilitated a meeting of 18 stakeholders, resulting in a draft mission and action plan.

Bureau of Land Management, Student Conservation Association

Ridgecrest, California 2010–2011

Desert Restoration Corps Member

Planned, documented, and led 6- to 14-person crews in field restoration work. Prepared and led environmental education workshops and field trips.

Education

University of Michigan

M.S., Natural Resources and Environment

Honors: Wyss Scholars Program for Conservation in the American West; U.S. Forest Service Chief's Scholars Program Finalist; University of Michigan Maize Behavior Award; Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum William D. Drake Prize

2013

University of Wisconsin–Madison

B.A., Psychology

Certificate, Environmental Studies

2009

Publications

Portner, Diana. 2018. "An Opportunity to End the Timber Wars: How Collaboration in Southeast Alaska Has Helped to Dissipate Conflict." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 1 (40): 45-53.