



Sarah K. Walen

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Summary

A Senior Mediator and Program Manager at Meridian Institute with 18 years of experience facilitating policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development processes. Expertise and experience in the areas of forest and natural resource management, community resilience, homeland security, hazardous and nuclear waste management and cleanup, energy, air quality management and regulation, and watershed management. Previously, worked for 11 years as a professional geologist and an environmental consultant. Holds an M.S. in Geology with an emphasis in Hydrogeology from the University of Massachusetts.

Meridian Experience

Meridian Institute

1999–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:

- Supports the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture, a joint effort of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and its partners the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund, and other strategic partners, to help shape standards and incentives towards deforestation-free beef and soy in South America and bring a coordinated approach to this work. Assisted the Pew Charitable Trusts and Cargill with the design and facilitation of the multi-stakeholder Meat and Poultry Dialogue (MPD) process to develop recommendations for updating the meat and poultry safety oversight system in the United States. The process was guided by a Steering Group composed of representatives from Pew and Cargill and others from the meat and poultry industry, retail food sector, consumer advocacy community, and academia. The MPD group developed and finalized a report containing a set of

recommendations that suggested significant changes to the federal oversight system in June 2017.

- Supported and facilitated the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation’s Environmental Conservation Program and its partners the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund, in their collaborative preparation of a proposal to their Board for the implementation of the Forests and Agricultural Markets Initiative. FAMI is a five-year effort that is working to help make deforestation-free beef and soy the global standard for these commodities.
- Served as lead facilitator for Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 TFA 2020’s regional work group focusing on Latin America, and the Gender and Inclusion Work Group. TFA 2020 is a public-private partnership in which partners from consumer goods and commodity production companies, governments, and civil society organizations take voluntary actions— individually and in combination—to reduce tropical deforestation associated with the sourcing of commodities such as palm oil, soy, beef, paper, and pulp.
- Convened and co-facilitated two teams of scientists from Winrock International (WI) and the Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC) at the request of Norway’s Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) and the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) to jointly discuss the differences in each team’s recent, independently published analyses yielding divergent estimates of gross emissions from tropical deforestation and determining the potential for a collaborative effort to address confusion in the scientific community.
- Managed and helped to develop Meridian’s work convening and facilitating collaborative community watershed groups in New Mexico to improve water surface quality and comply with Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Served as the facilitator of the Cimarron Watershed Alliance and the Rio Jemez Watershed Group.
- Please see <http://merid.org/staff/skwalen> for a full list of projects completed.

Previous Experience

Consultant

Silver Plume, Colorado 1998–1999

Mediator and Facilitator

Provided neutral, third-party mediation, facilitation, and general conflict management services in a variety of settings. Served as a mediator and facilitator of regional and national multi-party processes addressing a range of issues associated with the environment,

natural resource management, agriculture, and other community issues.

The Keystone Center

Keystone, Colorado 1994–1998

Associate, Science and Public Policy Program

Provided neutral, third-party mediation, facilitation, and general conflict management services to resolve regional, national, and international disputes over land use and natural resource management, environmental quality and

public health, science and technology, agriculture, and food and nutrition issues.

Rizzo Associates, Inc.

Enfield, Connecticut 1993

Senior Scientist

Conducted environmental site assessments, provided technical review of reports, managed projects, and prepared project budgets and proposals.

Environmental Compliance Services

Agawam, Massachusetts 1988–1993

Senior Hydrogeologist/Technical Director

Provided technical review and guidance for environmental site assessments and remedial investigations. Developed and coordinated quality assurance/quality control and technical training programs.

Supervised and performed environmental site assessments, remedial investigations, and remedial actions. Prepared proposals and cost estimates, and coordinated the college internship program.

IEP, Inc.

Northborough, Massachusetts 1982–1988

Senior Hydrogeologist

Managed and performed environmental site assessments, groundwater discharge permit evaluations, remedial investigations, and remedial actions. Provided technical review and assistance for a diversity of water-quality and resource studies, and prepared proposals and cost estimates. Developed and coordinated a health and safety training program to meet the standards of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Education

University of Massachusetts

M.S., Geology, emphasis in Hydrogeology
1983

Smith College

B.A., Geology
1977