

Facilitators Exchange

Your quarterly guide to Facilitators and Facilitation in USACE

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Welcome to the ninth issue of the Facilitators' Exchange Newsletter. It is your guide to all things facilitation related within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. You may find additional information at the Facilitators' Exchange webpage—<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/facilitator/facilitator.cfm>. The newsletter is intended to share information on facilitation webinars, case studies, process tools, facilitation resources, training opportunities, USACE facilitators and professional facilitation organizations. The Exchange is sponsored by Ms. Ada Benavides of the Civil Works Directorate.



Upcoming Webinar: 8 April 2015 at 1:00 pm Central

Our next Exchange webinar will be on Collaborative Decision Analysis for Stakeholder Agency Engagement in Resource Management—Horseshoe Bend Case Study with Dr. Mandy Michalsen, Supervisory Civil Engineer and Dr. Matt Wood, Research Psychologist, both of the ERDC Environmental Lab. See Webinar Presenters section in this newsletter for more information on Mandy, Matt and the webinar. The Call in/Web In, Access, and Security Codes are: 888-273-3658, 5165235, and 1234. You may access archives of past webinars at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/facilitator/exchange.cfm?Option=ArchiveSchedule&CoP=facilitator>. If you have ideas for future webinar topics, please provide them to Julie.B.Marcy@usace.army.mil.



Snow and record-breaking cold in Washington, DC in February 2015



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Facilitation Webinar Presenters:

Dr. Mandy Michalsen. Mandy is Supervisory Civil Engineer with the ERDC Environmental Lab.

Work Examples: Mandy's private and public sector experience has included building interdisciplinary teams comprised of research professionals, academia and engineers to plan and execute studies, field-scale technology demonstrations, and full-scale remedial actions in support of site cleanups where groundwater, soil and/or sediment have been impacted with organic (e.g. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs, explosives) and/or inorganic (e.g. arsenic) contaminants. Prior to joining ERDC in 2014, Mandy was Chief of Soils at Seattle District.



Dr. Matt Wood. Matt is a Research Psychologist with the ERDC Lab, Risk and Decision Science Team. Matt joined ERDC in 2013. His research focuses on the psychology of team problem solving, engineering design, and decision making processes, in particular, those that facilitate shared problem understanding and lead to mutually desirable outcomes. His experience includes empirical work in problem solving and decision making tasks in individuals and teams, natural language processing, and modeling cognition through computational and diagrammatic approaches.

Facilitation Sources Used: Past work has primarily been with contracted facilitators from outside USACE.

Example Efforts Facilitators Have Assisted With: Facilitators helped us with the Horseshoe Bend project, as well as for efforts to understand cross-disciplinary and cross-stakeholder issues to develop, identify, and address strategic planning efforts.

What Triggers You to Seek Facilitation Support?: Seek facilitation support when the number of individuals required to provide input is large, available time is limited, and/or issues to be discussed are complex and have a complicated history.





Snowy Pentagon and frozen Potomac River in Washington, DC



Process Prompt:

Leadership Strategies released “The Facilitator App”. This is a free mobile app for instant access to facilitation tools. It includes quick tips and techniques, facilitation videos and how tos, and available facilitation training classes and events. Tools are divided into application sections such as Preparing, Focusing, Information Gathering, Dysfunction, and Keeping Energy high. Sample videos include engagement strategies such as “The Whip”, “Rotating Flipcharts”, and “Dump and Clump”. Another video includes tips on “How to Choose Your Facilitator”. You may want to explore it for a memory refresher or some fresh ideas. See your cell phone Applications for the download.



Relevant Resource:

Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication. These cultural competency workshops have been offered for almost 40 years and provide information on current practices and networking opportunities. Three to five-day sessions are planned throughout July, and July also includes a “Cultural Detective Facilitator Certification Workshop”. The Intercultural Communication Institute also offers a SIIC Fellows Program with 30 individuals chosen annually. If you work with culturally diverse groups, you may want to learn more about programs the institute offers at: www.intercultural.org.

WINTER

Proficiency Pick:

Pet Rock—This is a good general ice-breaker for use in a group setting. Each person introduces themselves and shows an item they carry in a purse, wallet, briefcase, etc. They share with the group why the item is significant to them and who they are. A variation is to provide a selection of “neutral” objects and ask each individual to select an object and describe why it is significant to them and who they are.

Discussion Guidelines to Consider:

No backtracking for people who are late. No finger pointing—address the process not the individual. No killer statements—do not shoot down ideas. Everyone is expected to help facilitate the meeting.

Adapted from <http://www.managersforum.com/resources/exercises.htm>.



HQUSACE PDT working on Civil Works Transformation.



Observing World Water Day in March 2015

Please send your facilitation case studies, photos and newsletter ideas to Julie.B.Marcy@usace.army.mil.