Collaboration and Strategic Communications

Kearns & West – A Unique Approach

Kearns & West (K&W) has more than 27 years experience facilitating collaborative processes, designing public engagement programs, and conducting policy formation initiatives that address energy, water, marine, and natural resource and land management challenges. K&W's collaboration programs take a complex range of issues, opinions, goals, and needs, and organizes them into clear, productive processes that lead to successful outcomes. We are experts in identifying the right suite of tools and techniques needed for effective stakeholder interactions that lead to lasting, mutually satisfying results.

We specialize in:
- Planning and implementing effective collaborative processes.
- Identifying and assessing stakeholder interests.
- Facilitating and mediating policy and permitting dialogues.
- Developing and implementing public engagement and outreach programs.

How We Do It

K&W works closely with organizations and stakeholders to identify issues, facilitate/mediate effective collaborative discussions, and design public engagement programs to create solutions addressing interests. The firm uses interdisciplinary teams of facilitators/mediators and communications professionals to bring public policy, legal, science and engineering backgrounds to achieve organization and stakeholder goals. Our diverse backgrounds enable us to understand stakeholders' varied interests and develop appropriate strategies to resolve issues. K&W is unique in how we apply our deep experience in the energy, water, and environmental sectors to our collaboration and public engagement programs. Our success stems from our ability to identify stakeholders, build partnerships, encourage collaboration, communicate visions and achieve tangible results while understanding the policy and technical context of our projects.
Stakeholders have increased expectations for participation in land use, environmental, and infrastructure projects. Structured public engagement fosters long-term program success.

What We Do

Our clients include local, state and federal government agencies, utilities, developers, and non-profit organizations. K&W assists in the following areas:

» Collaboration: Natural resource and environmental programs frequently involve disputes among the public, permittees, and regulatory agencies. We identify areas of concern and bring together the right stakeholders to create lasting solutions.

» Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach: A well-planned stakeholder engagement and outreach program helps an organization understand its stakeholders’ needs, form a basis of mutual understanding, and conduct a fair and open process. K&W is expert at implementing stakeholder engagement that effectively and transparently resolves tough issues.

» Policy Formation: K&W’s in-depth knowledge of regulatory policies enables us to successfully, actively, and collaboratively shape solutions around rules and regulations that achieve greater environmental gains more efficiently.

Recent Collaboration, Stakeholder Engagement, and Outreach Experience

» San Joaquin River Restoration Program – Developed and now implementing a public engagement plan to guide communications for this broad-scale U.S. Bureau of Land Management river restoration program.

» Transmission Line Siting – Facilitated the design and now implementing comprehensive interagency and public engagement activities associated with permitting Cascade Crossing, a 200-mile, 500 kilovolt transmission line planned by Portland General Electric.

» Marine Protected Areas – Worked with the State of California to involve stakeholder in identifying and implementing a network of marine protected areas along 1,100 miles of the State’s coastal waters.

» Balancing Urban and Rural Reserves – With K&W’s facilitation, the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area reached a historic consensus on Urban and Rural Reserves designations protecting farmland, forestland and natural resources while also identifying lands for future population growth, jobs, homes and neighborhoods for the next 50 years.

» Drought Management – Facilitated a group comprising municipal water suppliers, industrial water users, state and federal resource agencies, and a hydropower owner charged with managing the Charlotte NC region’s worst recorded drought. K&W facilitated the group as it implemented politically charged water use restrictions to preserve water for the most essential uses.

» Hydroelectric Licensing Policy Improvements – Developed and facilitated a multi-year collaborative process with non-profits, industry, and state and federal agencies that developed policy recommendations to improve the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) hydroelectric licensing process. Subsequently facilitated parts of FERC’s rulemaking proceedings and later conducted two effectiveness evaluations on the implementation of the resulting regulation.

For More Information

To learn more about Kearns & West’s services and capabilities, please contact us in Portland, OR at 503-221-1650, in Sacramento, CA at 530-231-5680, in San Francisco, CA at 415-391-7900 and in Washington, DC at 202-535-7800, or e-mail us at info@kearnswest.com.