

ADVANCING AND ENABLING

Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement



Leading engagement processes for complex decision-making for more than 40 years



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Engaging the full diversity of stakeholders and incorporating their concerns and values into decision-making can increase the likelihood of success for all parties and can result in increased public trust and confidence in projects.

With four decades of delivering effective stakeholder engagement, facilitation, and outreach, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) has a demonstrated history of partnering with and supporting numerous public agencies. Our programs, techniques, and processes that focus on collaborative and equitable engagement strategies are easily tailored to address a variety of issues associated with complex environmental decision-making and planning.

Capabilities

PNNL's interdisciplinary team—with expertise in environmental assessments, renewable and non-renewable energy research and development, social science, cultural resources management, tribal relations, science communications, and public affairs—offers a breadth of applied industry and professional experience. Our work incorporates tools, solutions, and strategies to meet the needs of project sponsors while integrating stakeholder input and values.

Effective stakeholder engagement in support of complex and competing environmental, social and economic issues.



Stakeholder ID/analysis	Meeting facilitation	Science communications
Stakeholder interviews	Eliciting input and values	Public and government affairs
Engagement planning and execution	Event coordination	Communications and community outreach
National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation; tribal identification and involvement		



Applications Include

- Competing demands for water and energy resources
- Energy-related projects (e.g., siting and licensing as well as developing consent-based siting approaches)
- Environmental remediation and risk
- Geological and terrestrial sequestration of carbon dioxide
- Spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management and transportation
- Environmental justice assessments
- Gathering stakeholder values to guide research and development efforts

Engagement Strategies and Solutions for Complex Decision-Making



Environmental Assessments

PNNL has provided repeat support for state and federal agencies during complex, high-profile decision-making processes. As part of PNNL's comprehensive, in-house National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) team, we work interactively with clients and stakeholders throughout the NEPA process using tools and techniques that rigorously analyze the trade-offs between costs, public risks, and stakeholder values.



Environmental Justice Engagement

PNNL develops solutions and capabilities to advance environmental justice engagement with 25 years of hands-on, multidisciplinary experience nationwide. PNNL partners with federal and state agencies and industry to identify and engage minority, low-income, resource-dependent, or other historically disadvantaged populations in regulatory decision-making, environmental assessment, and impact estimation of the consequences of large and complex polices and projects.



Tribal Identification and Engagement

With longstanding and trusted relationships with Tribes, PNNL has expertise in tribal-specific, culturally sensitive engagement and consultation. This includes identification of Tribes with geographic connections to proposed projects throughout the United States, along with anthropologists and archaeologists who are experts in National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultations, traditional cultural property documentation, and oral history interviews. Our expertise includes streamlining NHPA through NEPA, which identifies both cultural and environmental justice issues.



Comment Response Database

This web-based software offers an efficient solution for analyzing, sorting, tracking, summarizing, and responding to public comments. It streamlines the labor-intensive process of accepting and resolving public feedback and integrates these comments into projects and programs. It has been used successfully to process tens of thousands of comments, significantly shortening agency response time while facilitating consistency and making sure comments and concerns are captured and incorporated into the decision-making process and record.

Clients

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) | National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) | U.S. Department of Defense | U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management, and Office of Nuclear Energy, and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO) | U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) | State/local agencies

Key Projects

- PNNL was instrumental in assisting the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in adapting its stakeholder engagement program to fully examine identified environmental justice issues to identify an appropriate, mitigated solution.
- The Bonneville Power Administration requested PNNL support to assist with NEPA requirements tied to ongoing operations of 14 hydroelectric dams on the Columbia River. This large engagement effort included federal interagency coordination, along with hosting 16 public meetings in four states within three months. It also included communication strategies to convey complex information to broad audiences. PNNL continues to partner on engagement efforts with Bonneville Power Administration.
- DOE Office of Nuclear Energy's Office of Integrated Waste Management program conducts evaluations of removing spent nuclear fuel from nuclear power plant sites. PNNL has supported visits to nuclear power plant sites and leads a multi-laboratory effort to conduct these visits. These evaluations provide an opportunity to incorporate the perspectives of tribal, state, and federal agency partners regarding transport of spent nuclear fuel from the site and includes observing the transportation infrastructure at and near the sites, fact-checking and taking detailed photos/videos, and exchanging information with site managers. PNNL collaborates with the International Atomic Energy Agency on issues associated with spent fuel management and transportation.
- At the Hanford Site in Washington State, PNNL helped shape cleanup efforts with the development of a novel Native American human health risk assessment that included aspects of a traditional tribal way of life and unique tribal exposure pathways.
- PNNL worked with the U.S. NRC on consultations to understand if there were potential impacts from the proposed power plant expansion on the lives and culture of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe in Virginia. Based on a thorough tribal engagement process, the NEPA analysis was broadened to encompass unique tribal values.



- PNNL gathers stakeholder values to guide research and development efforts in support of DOE WPTO, developing stakeholder outreach strategies and consistent messaging to cultivate a dialogue with the hydropower community.

Bench Depth

Our in-house specialists offer a continuity of expertise. They are an enduring resource to all federal agencies—ranging from senior scientists with national recognition and decades of experience, to early career researchers. Our expertise spans every technical discipline necessary for environmental reviews and meaningful stakeholder engagement. This includes experts in facilitation, event coordination, communications, and graphic design, along with technical experts in socioeconomics, environmental justice, cultural and historic resources, ecology, hydrology, geology, meteorology, air quality, land use, engineering, human health and safety, transportation, and accident analyses.

For more information, contact:

Tara O'Neil

Manager, Nuclear Regulatory Subsector
Advisor, Earth Systems Science
tara.oneil@pnnl.gov | (541) 738-0362

Ann Miracle, PhD

Group Leader, Risk & Environmental Assessment
ann.miracle@pnnl.gov | (509) 372-4327