



Michael Kern, Principal Michael Kern Consulting, LLC

Michael Kern Consulting provides strategic advice and guidance to public, private, and NGO sector leaders and decision-makers designing, conducting, and implementing collaborative processes.

Michael Kern has over 30 years of experience in helping groups of diverse interests reach common ground on a wide range of public policy issues. In addition to a Master of Public Administration degree, Michael has a fine arts background, which helps him bring a creative mindset to policy challenges. He specializes in finding innovative approaches, and getting groups “unstuck.” He has a strong regional, national, and international reputation in the field of collaborative governance, and a network of the most accomplished and respected practitioners with whom to partner when circumstances dictate. His areas of expertise include:

- Facilitation/mediation/conflict resolution
- Teaching/training
- Situation assessment
- Strategic planning/visioning
- Project management
- Organizational development
- Intergovernmental relations
- Fundraising strategy



Created by Dave Sims from the Noun Project

From 2010-21, Michael was Director of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center at Washington State University (WSU) and the University of Washington (UW). Under his leadership, the Center tripled its budget, endowment, and core faculty/staff. It successfully conducted many important collaborative policy projects that proved the value of an independent convener at the state’s flagship universities, helping create lasting, consensus solutions.

“(Michael’s) work with the Ruckelshaus Center has made a durable and inspired contribution to our universities, our communities, and our great state of Washington.” — Presidents Ana Mari Cauce (UW) and Kirk Schulz (WSU)

Prior to leading the Ruckelshaus Center, Michael was a Senior Associate at Triangle Associates Inc., providing facilitation, mediation, strategic planning, project management, and other services. He has also provided these services at nonprofit and academic institutions for the North Cascades Initiative, Hatchery Reform Project, Hanford Openness Workshops, Tribal Risk Roundtable, and other projects.

Michael is an Affiliate Associate Professor at the UW Evans School of Public Policy & Governance; Adjunct Associate Professor at WSU Extension; Adjunct Professor at Seattle University; Director of Special Projects at UW’s Center for Urban Waters/Puget Sound Institute; and served as a Fulbright Specialist in Israel.

Professional Affiliations

- Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) Roster of Environmental Conflict Resolution Professionals
- National Policy Consensus Center Affiliated Practitioner Team Roster
- University Network for Collaborative Governance
- ACR Environment and Public Policy Section
- International Association for Conflict Management
- National Coalition for Deliberation and Dialogue
- American Society for Public Administration

Project Experience (*more info. available upon request*)

Michael has led and been part of projects on a wide range of topics such as natural resource management, land use, emergency response, clean energy, agriculture, organizational development, strategic planning, solid waste, housing, health care, and many others for private, non-governmental, and public organizations at all levels including federal, tribal, state, and local governments.

References (*contact information available upon request*)

- Michael Brown, Chief Architect, Seattle Foundation Civic Commons
- Phyllis Campbell, NW Pres., JP Morgan Chase (ret.)
- Bob Drewel, Special Assistant to the WSU President, former Snohomish County Executive and Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Director
- Christine Gregoire, CEO, Challenge Seattle, former WA Governor
- Sally Jewell, Distinguished Fellow, UW College of the Environment, former US Secretary of the Interior and CEO, Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI)
- Ralph Munro, former WA Secretary of State
- Paul Ward (Yakama Nation), Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

“Thanks again for ... such a spectacular workshop. I really think this will materially change how things progress this year.” — Janel Ulrich, Hydro Licensing Manager, Chelan PUD