



# Meridian Institute

Connecting People to Solve Problems

## Connie Lewis

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### Summary

Cofounder of and Senior Partner at Meridian Institute, with more than 30 years of experience facilitating national and international policy dialogues, negotiations, and internal and multi-organizational strategy development processes. A recognized leader in the field of facilitation and consensus building, with expertise and experience in wildlife and fisheries management, forestry, protected area management, air and water quality, agricultural policy, energy policy, community-based decision making, health, and facility siting. Holds an M.S. in Wildland Resource Science from the University of California at Berkeley's School of Natural Resources.

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### Meridian Experience

#### Meridian Institute

1997–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 Partner

Cofounded Meridian in 1997 with four partners. Serves as program director of the organization, involved in program and project development, strategic planning, human resources, and finance. Designs, manages, and leads policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects involving teams of facilitators. For these projects, conducts convening assessments, designs processes, secures financial support, plans and facilitates meetings, helps participants develop consensus documents, and conducts implementation activities such as press releases and briefings. Selected highlights are summarized below:

- Currently facilitating the federally chartered Tongass Advisory Committee that is developing recommendations about how to transition timber harvest on the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska from old growth to primarily young growth management.

- Led the Meridian team facilitating the national collaboration to obtain feedback on Forest Service Planning Regulations. This project involved more than 3,000 stakeholders and more than 40 meetings around the country, as well as consultations with Tribes and outreach to all U.S. Forest Service employees.
- Designed and led a series of cutting-edge national dialogues among diverse interests on the issues of biodiversity, ecosystem management, and watershed management. These dialogues—including The National Watershed Forum, National Policy Dialogue on Ecosystem Management, Department of Defense Dialogue on a Biodiversity Strategy, and National Policy Dialogue on Biological Diversity on Federal Lands—all resulted in consensus recommendations that have been broadly implemented and have helped to chart the course nationally for these key issues.
- Please see <http://merid.org/staff/connielewis> for a full list of projects completed.

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## Previous Experience

### The Keystone Center

Keystone, Colorado 1986–1997

*Associate Director, Science and Public Policy Program*

Shared responsibility for a variety of program issues, including personnel management and project staffing decisions, strategic planning, and overall program quality. Served as project director and lead convener, facilitator, and mediator of negotiations and policy dialogues aimed at resolving a wide variety of issues. Project emphasis was on domestic and international natural resource and environmental quality issues.

### University of California, School of Natural Resources

Berkeley, California 1985–1987

*Research Assistant*

Conducted research on community involvement in natural resource conflicts.

### Outdoor Education Center

Breckenridge, Colorado 1979–1985

*Executive Director*

Directed an organization, modeled after Outward Bound, for people with physical and developmental disabilities. Responsible for overall leadership of the organization, fundraising, marketing, board relations, budget and fiscal management, community outreach, program quality assurance, and oversight of a staff of 22.

### U.S. Forest Service, Northern Research Station

Fairbanks, Alaska 1978

*Botanist*

Conducted research on relationships between fire, permafrost, and plant succession.

### The Athenian School

Danville, California 1975–1978

*Science Teacher*

Taught high school science and directed the school's outdoor education and wilderness outings programs.

## **Education**

### **University of California at Berkeley**

M.S., Wildland Resource Science, Policy Emphasis

1990

### **Southern Oregon College**

B.S., Biology

1973