



Social Ecology – The Science of Community

A course to minimize your Social Risk

Social Ecology is a way to “learn community first.” It is a proven process for initiating successful projects, programs and policies.

The key to nurturing citizen ownership is to minimize harm and optimize benefit. This is accomplished by engaging residents in the community in their own settings—their “natural habitat.”

Active listening focuses on specific issues instead of general themes that often generate heat but not light. By focusing on individuals who are well-regarded in their circles, realistic and problem-solving dialogue can result. This course provides the opportunity to create a framework for developing positive relationships built on open communication and mutual respect.

The training will also show you how to gain authentic long-term support for your project by using this unique cultural awareness approach.

You will learn to...

1. Use your natural observation skills in a community setting.
2. Discover informal networks and how to interact with these networks to create opportunities for engagement.
3. Understand how human geography affects local communication patterns and decision-making processes.
4. Identify gathering places where information is shared and why they are critical to project success.
5. Interact with people in informal networks, such as natural helpers, storytellers and authenticators, in order to develop effective communication methods.
6. Recognize three stages of citizen issues—emerging, existing and disruptive—and how to manage them for success.

Want a sneak preview?

Read about the introduction of this course to right of way engineers—“[The People Factor](#)” by James Kent and Kevin Preister in [Right of Way](#) magazine, Jan/Feb, 2014. Here is a sample:

“Social ecology involves ways to include affected people that are comfortable for them, entering their environment, learning about their world, and getting their ideas, so that the final project not only addresses its technical goals, but strengthens community life as well.”

Plus, a live field trip is included! Class participants will go into the community and apply the knowledge and skills learned by visiting the local restaurants, libraries, schools and other gathering places where “life happens.”

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