

Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin Stakeholder Collaborative Process *Fall 2008-2009*

Location: Alabama, Florida, and Georgia

Background

The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin (ACF) spans over 19,000 square miles, and is a source of fresh water for Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. The ACF is managed for a variety of purposes, including navigation, power, flood control, and recreation, and is an economic, natural and cultural resource for the diverse stakeholders throughout the basin. Water use and allocation in the basin has been in dispute and litigation for more than 20 years.

In July 2008, several interested parties and individuals approached the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (U.S. Institute) for advice in convening a balanced and representative ACF stakeholder group to address water and environmental management issues within the basin, with an emphasis on resolving water allocation disputes between the states of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.

In response to this request, the U.S. Institute conducted a situation assessment, finding that a stakeholder forum was generally supported and could have a positive impact on stakeholder relationships and water management in the basin. With the assistance of the U.S. Institute, a steering committee formed and developed the structural underpinnings and support for a stakeholder group. The group was incorporated as the ACF Stakeholders, Inc. (ACFS) in the fall of 2009.

By its first meeting in December, 2009, the ACFS included more than 95 member organizations, with a 56-member Governing Board. The U.S. Institute organized and facilitated the inaugural meeting, and more meetings are planned in the future.



Results and Accomplishments

The ACFS is a grassroots, stakeholder-driven effort with a diverse and balanced group of decision makers and stakeholders. The group practices collaboration in a number of ways, including,

- The ACF Steering Committee collaboratively developed the ACFS Charter and By-Laws
- The ACFS organizes by river sub-basin rather than by state
- The ACFS Governing Board operates by consensus on substantive decisions

In their words

In the words of one of the participating ACF Stakeholders:

"All could be improved if this process is successful. We are only now just starting. Without this process we would be stuck in litigation. The opportunities are great..."

Credits

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