

FY 2020 ECCR Report

Name of Department/Agency responding:	Department of Veterans Affairs
Name and Title/Position of person responding:	Lara Spader, Director, Energy Management Program Service
Division/Office of person responding:	Office of Asset Enterprise Management
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Date this report is being submitted:	February 26, 2021
Name of ECCR Forum Representative	Catherine Johnson

1. ECCR Capacity Building Progress:

- a) Describe any **NEW, CHANGED, or ACTIVELY ONGOING** steps taken by your department or agency to build programmatic and institutional capacity for environmental collaboration and conflict resolution in FY 2020, including progress made since FY 2019.

Please also include any efforts to establish routine procedures for considering ECCR in specific situations or categories of cases, including any efforts to provide institutional support for non-assisted collaboration efforts.

Please refer to the mechanisms and strategies presented in Section 5 and attachment C of the [OMB-CEQ ECCR Policy Memo](#) for additional guidance on what to include here.

Examples include but are not restricted to efforts to:

- Integrate ECCR objectives into agency mission statements, Government Performance and Results Act goals, and strategic planning;
- Assure that your agency's infrastructure supports ECCR;
- Invest in support, programs, or trainings; and d) focus on accountable performance and achievement.

Please refer to your agency's FY 2019 report to only include new, changed or actively ongoing ECCR capacity building progress. **If none, leave this section blank.**

Historically, there have not been a significant number of VA projects where environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR) would be appropriate. However, VA is committed to increasing the use of collaborative decision-making and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes. VA is actively advocating the use of mediation and other ADR processes and ensuring that reliable, credible, technical, and scientific information is available to stakeholders that are engaged in collaborative resource management efforts.

VA continues to implement VA Directive 5978, Alternative Dispute Resolution which specifically addresses environmental conflict resolution. The directive designates the Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management as the person responsible for VA's ECCR Program - including assuring participation of VA staff offices and Administrations in developing and implementing VA's ECCR program; promoting the use of ECCR where appropriate; and tracking and reporting on the use of ECCR within VA.

Additionally, VA seeks the input of stakeholders through public meetings for actions and projects that it anticipates will generate controversy. VA maintains an Environmental ADR Program website, <https://www.va.gov/adr/EnvADR.asp>

- b) Please describe the trainings given in your department/agency in FY 2020. Please include a list of the trainings, if possible. If known, please provide the course names and total number of people trained. Please refer to your agency's FY 2019 report to include ONLY trainings given in FY 2020. **If none, leave this section blank.**

VA did not provide any training on ECCR in FY 2020.

2. ECCR Investments and Benefits

- a) Please describe any **NEW or CHANGED or INNOVATIVE** investments made in ECCR in FY 2020. Examples of investments may include (but are not limited to):
- ECCR programmatic FTEs
 - Dedicated ECCR budgets
 - Funds spent on contracts to support ECCR cases and programs

Please refer to your agency's FY 2019 report to only include new, changed, or innovative investments made in ECCR. **If none, leave this section blank.**

VA has not historically had the need to utilize the ECCR process and therefore has not identified any investments made in ECCR.

b) Please describe any **NEW or CHANGED** benefits realized when using ECCR in FY 2020. Examples of benefits may include (but are not limited to):

- Cost savings
- Environmental and natural resource results
- Furtherance of agency mission
- Improved working relationship with stakeholders
- Avoidance of litigation
- Timely project progression

Please refer to your agency's FY 2019 report to only include new or changed benefits of ECCR realized in FY 2020. If none, leave this section blank.

As stated previously, VA has not identified any ECCR investments or benefits.

3. ECCR Use

Describe the level of ECCR use within your department/agency in FY 2020 by completing the three tables below. [Please refer to the definition of ECCR from the OMB-CEQ memo as presented on page one of this template. An ECCR “case or project” is an instance of neutral third-party involvement to assist parties in a collaborative or conflict resolution process.]

To avoid double counting processes, please select one category per case for decision making forums and for ECCR applications.

	Total FY 2020 ECCR Cases ¹	Decision making forum that was addressing the issues when ECCR was initiated:			
		Federal agency decision	Administrative proceedings /appeals	Judicial proceedings	Other** (specify below)
<i>Context for ECCR Applications:</i>					
Policy development	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Planning	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Siting and construction	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Rulemaking	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
License and permit issuance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify): _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>
(the sum of the Decision Making Forums should equal Total FY 2020 ECCR Cases)					

****If you indicated above that any of your ECCR cases or projects were initiated in an “other” decision making forum, please elaborate here.**

N/A

¹ An “ECCR case” is a case in which a third-party neutral was active in a particular matter during FY 2020.

<i>Context for ECCR Applications:</i>	Interagency ECCR Cases and Projects	
	Included Other Federal Agencies Only	Included Non-Federal Participants (e.g., states, Tribes, and non governmental)
Policy development	_____	_____
Planning	_____	_____
Siting and construction	_____	_____
Rulemaking	_____	_____
License and permit issuance	_____	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____	_____
Other (specify): _____	_____	_____
TOTAL	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

<i>Context for ECCR Applications:</i>	ECCR Cases or projects completed ²	ECCR Cases or Projects sponsored ³
Policy development	_____	_____
Planning	_____	_____
Siting and construction	_____	_____
Rulemaking	_____	_____
License and permit issuance	_____	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____	_____
Other (specify): _____	_____	_____
TOTAL	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

² A “completed case” means that neutral third-party involvement in a particular ECCR case ended during FY 2020. The end of neutral third-party involvement does not necessarily mean that the parties have concluded their collaboration/negotiation/dispute resolution process, that all issues are resolved, or that agreement has been reached.

³ Sponsored - to be a sponsor of an ECCR case means that an agency is contributing financial or in-kind resources (e.g., a staff mediator’s time) to provide the neutral third party’s services for that case. More than one sponsor is possible for a given ECCR case.

Note: If you subtract completed ECCR cases from Total FY 2020 cases it should equal total ongoing cases. If you subtract sponsored ECCR cases from Total FY 2020 ECCR cases it should equal total cases in which your agency or department participated but did not sponsor. If you subtract the combined interagency ECCR cases from Total FY 2020 cases it should equal total cases that involved only your agency or department with no other federal agency involvement.

4. ECCR Case Example

Using the template below, provide a description of an ECCR case (preferably **completed** in FY 2020). If possible, focus on an interagency ECCR case. Please limit the length to **no more than 1 page**.

In FY 2020, VA did not have the opportunity to participate in any ECCR cases.

Name/Identification of Problem/Conflict:
<i>[Please add case "title" here]</i>
Overview of problem/conflict and timeline, including reference to the nature and timing of the third-party assistance, and how the ECCR effort was funded.
N/A
Summary of how the problem or conflict was addressed using ECCR, including details of any innovative approaches to ECCR, and how the principles for engagement in ECCR outlined in the policy memo were used.
N/A
Identify the key beneficial outcomes of this case, including references to likely alternative decision-making forums and how the outcomes differed as a result of ECCR.
N/A
Please share any reflections on the lessons learned from the use of ECCR.
N/A

5. Other ECCR Notable Cases

Briefly describe any other notable ECCR cases in FY 2020. (OPTIONAL)

N/A

6. Priority Uses of ECCR

Please describe your agency's **NEW or CHANGED** efforts to address priority or emerging areas of conflict and cross-cutting challenges either individually or in coordination with other agencies. For example, consider the following areas: NEPA, ESA, CERCLA, energy development, energy transmission, CWA 404 permitting, tribal consultation, environmental justice, management of ocean resources, infrastructure development, National Historic Preservation Act, other priority areas. Please refer to your agency's FY 2019 report to only include new or increased priority uses. **If none, leave this section blank.**

N/A

7. Non-Third Party-Assisted Collaboration Processes (Optional)

Briefly describe other **significant** uses of environmental collaboration that your agency has undertaken in FY 2020 to anticipate, prevent, better manage, or resolve environmental issues and conflicts that do not include a third-party neutral. *Examples may include interagency MOUs, enhanced public engagement, and structural committees with the capacity to resolve disputes, etc.* **If none, leave this section blank.**

N/A

8. Comments and Suggestions on Reporting

Please comment on any **NEW or CHANGED** difficulties you encountered in collecting these data and if and how you overcame them. Please provide suggestions for improving these questions in the future. Please reference your agency’s FY 2019 report to identify new/increased difficulties. **If none, leave this section blank.**

N/A

Please attach any additional information as warranted.

Report due Friday, February 26, 2020.

Submit report electronically to: kavanaugh@udall.gov

**Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in
Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving**

Informed Commitment	Confirm willingness and availability of appropriate agency leadership and staff at all levels to commit to principles of engagement; ensure commitment to participate in good faith with open mindset to new perspectives
Balanced, Voluntary Representation	Ensure balanced inclusion of affected/concerned interests; all parties should be willing and able to participate and select their own representatives
Group Autonomy	Engage with all participants in developing and governing process; including choice of consensus-based decision rules; seek assistance as needed from impartial facilitator/mediator selected by and accountable to all parties
Informed Process	Seek agreement on how to share, test and apply relevant information (scientific, cultural, technical, etc.) among participants; ensure relevant information is accessible and understandable by all participants
Accountability	Participate in the process directly, fully, and in good faith; be accountable to all participants, as well as agency representatives and the public
Openness	Ensure all participants and public are fully informed in a timely manner of the purpose and objectives of process; communicate agency authorities, requirements and constraints; uphold confidentiality rules and agreements as required for particular proceedings
Timeliness	Ensure timely decisions and outcomes
Implementation	Ensure decisions are implementable consistent with federal law and policy; parties should commit to identify roles and responsibilities necessary to implement agreement; parties should agree in advance on the consequences of a party being unable to provide necessary resources or implement agreement; ensure parties will take steps to implement and obtain resources necessary to agreement