



What's Troubling You?

The Spring Issue of our e-bulletin is dedicated to helping U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) employees get the help they need. Whether the help is tackling problems at work or home, this issue offers employees solutions.

As Your Employer of Choice, the FWS wants to work with you to help get you the resources you need!

The Easier, Softer Way...

Wouldn't life be grand if people at work did and said what we wanted them to do and say? Wouldn't work be wonderful if only our co-workers and supervisors managed better?

Even in the best of situations, most of us experience conflicts at work. Luckily the FWS offers employees an option for managing and resolving workplace conflicts and disputes. The solution is CORE Plus.

"We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are."

Anais Nin

The CORE Plus program, administered by the Department of the Interior's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (ADR), is voluntary, and provides impartial and confidential

assistance to any employee seeking to improve or resolve a workplace issue or concern. Assistance ranges from a confidential consultation, individual conflict coaching, communication and conflict management training, group facilitation, team-building, conciliation, or mediation services.

CORE Plus also offers FWS employees conflict management tools, dispute resolution assistance, and education and training opportunities to

improve communication and team building. CORE Plus can also help supervisors manage change, strengthen teams and partnerships, and improve organizational performance.

CORE PLUS is:

- available to all employees;
- fair and impartial;
- flexible and informal;
- voluntary and confidential;
- non-adversarial;
- a safe place for difficult conversations; and
- a source of information, education and assistance to help reduce workplace tensions, improve communication, manage conflict, and build productive teams.

The program also offers FWS employees a quicker and less costly solution to their problems.

Although there are no time limits or formal requirements for seeking assistance through the CORE PLUS program, employees should be aware that contacting a CORE PLUS Program representative does not change the filing requirements and deadlines for the complaint processes. Nor does CORE Plus replace any other complaint process available to FWS employees. Anyone seeking CORE Plus assistance will be encouraged to obtain information about all of their options and will be referred to the appropriate point of contact for reliable information on other processes.

An employee who seeks EEO counseling, files a complaint, or an administrative grievance may have the option to request an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process through the CORE Plus Program to attempt informal resolution of



the issues underlying a grievance or other type of complaint. CORE Plus helps employees consider their options so they can decide what will meet their needs in a specific situation.

If the parties agree to ADR, they try to resolve the grievance within 45 days (unless the Human Resources Office and the parties jointly agree to an extension) and can extend the timeframes up to 45 days (unless the parties jointly agree to an extension), for filing a grievance under the formal procedures. In the EEO process, ADR extends the counseling period to 90 days.

Either party may terminate the ADR process at any time. The CORE Plus specialist will discuss the reasons for termination or document the decision to terminate the process in writing and provided a copy of the documentation to the grievant and grievance official.

If the easier and softer way sounds good to you contact the FWS Bureau Dispute Resolution Specialist, Angela Graziano at 703.358.1887 or Angela_Graziano@fws.gov, a CORE Plus program coordinator in your regional office, a CORE PLUS roster member, or the Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution.

Information about the CORE PLUS program is also available through your supervisor, a human resources office, an EEO office or any EEO counselor, or on the Internet at www.doi.gov/cadr/coreplus.

The FWS will be rolling out the CORE Plus Program to all employees via a satellite broadcast in late May. Stay tuned for details!

Employee Assistance Program

Each year, one out of five employees faces a significant problem that disrupts life at home and reduces productivity at work. FWS employees can receive free help from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides a confidential and comprehensive program that can assist employees with resolving their personal concerns, including:

- Emotional Issues
- Relationship Issues
- Family Issues
- Alcohol Issues
- Job Concerns
- Financial Issues and Financial Planning
- Legal Issues

Employees can contact the EAP by calling 1-800-222-0364.