

Chapter 2

Bringing People Together

The First Meeting

So, you've invited a group of folks to your first meeting. The coffee is on. The cookies are out. Now what? How do you break the ice and start getting to know each other?

Icebreaker games

Icebreaker games help set the stage for a positive meeting by getting people to relax and helping them get to know each other. An icebreaker should be brief and light-hearted, and establish a feeling of shared space. It can be as simple as having people say their name and where they live to having people share a personal story about their property.

The key is to plan enough time in the meeting for icebreakers. Depending on the size of the group and the icebreaker's purpose, plan for about 15 to 30 minutes.

Examples of icebreakers

People Bingo

This icebreaker helps people learn interesting facts about each other. People walk around the room and talk to each other to find out who matches the facts listed on a bingo-style sheet. Materials required are printed bingo sheets and pens. There is an example of a People Bingo card (called "WOWnet Bingo") and instructions on page 18.

Two Truths and a Lie

This is a get-acquainted icebreaker. Each person tells two truths and one lie about themselves. The group then votes on which statement they believe to be false. No materials are required.

Forest Story Cards

Forest Story Cards are a tool developed by Penn State University to initiate dialogue with people about their forests. The card set has



Photo by Nicole Strong, © Oregon State University

An easy and fun way to get folks to know each other is to get a county map and ask participants to label where they live. These Oregon WOWnet members had a great time meeting neighbors they never knew they had!



Photo by Nicole Strong, © Oregon State University

Another great icebreaker is Logger Lingo. Fill out index cards, one with a forestry term and another with a definition. Pass out cards to the group, and have participants find their corresponding definition or term. Here, two Oregon WOWnet women are displaying their pair, "Board Foot" and "Increment used to measure lumber, logs, and timber = 1" x 12" x 12" "

Your first meeting is critical for creating your network. The key is to create an open, friendly, and inclusive atmosphere that makes people want to participate and join your network.

Resources

Moving Beyond Icebreakers. A great book that provides tools, tips, and lesson plans on group facilitation, effective meetings, and more. Available in hard copy and as a PDF. <http://www.movingbeyondicebreakers.org/>

Several different organizations provide icebreaker and team-building ideas on the Internet:

http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca/helpfultools/Toolbox/fac_icebreakers.htm

http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

http://www.volunteerflorida.org/ameriCorps/docs/2011/AmeriCorps_Director_Resources/CityYearNotreDamelcebreakerGuide.pdf

<http://icebreakerideas.wordpress.com/>

Forest Story Cards (Heritage Series Set)

What are they?

Forest Story Cards are a pack of photographs that serve as a starting point for conversations about things people love about their land, things they're concerned about, and things they hope will happen in the future on their land. If a picture is worth a thousand words, these Forest Story Cards serve as a point to bring out those thousand words about a person's forestland or interest in land.

How can I use them?

If you have an upcoming woods walk, woodland owners' association meeting, or other event, these cards foster conversation about forestland. The Forest Story Card set includes some heritage images that hopefully will evoke conversation around what people love and are concerned about, and really get them thinking about the future of the land. Instructions on how to use the cards and some sample questions to ask are included in each pack. The basic way to use them is to have people look at the photos to launch a discussion about what is important to them.

How were they developed?

The cards were created by Dr. Sanford "Sandy" Smith at Penn State University as a visual tool for generating conversations about forests and their stewardship. Drs. Jim Finley and Allyson Muth, also of Penn State University, provided important contributions and advice in developing this Heritage Series set. By telling stories about one's forestland, both the storyteller and the story-listener can gain a better understanding of how the forestland is experienced and what is important. The stories also can lead to a better understanding of who landowners are, what they value, and how best to connect them with information resources.

How can I get them?

Penn State Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Extension has a set of Forest Story Cards that are available for loan. We'll ship them out to you and provide the shipping labels to have the cards returned at no cost to you. You may choose to purchase your own set of cards by contacting Penn State RNR Extension, or make your own. Please contact Allyson if you're interested in borrowing the Forest Story Cards to use at your next event: 814-863-0401 or abm173@psu.edu

WOWNET BINGO

The Rules

- People must sign their name by the statement that applies to them on the answer card.
- Only one person may sign a statement.
- Each statement must be signed by a different person.
- You may sign your own sheet once.
- Once you have a complete row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) shout BINGO! and collect your prize!

Feel free to change the statements in the Bingo boxes to better reflect local relevance and your group's interests.

FIND SOMEONE WHO:

Has lived outside the U.S. for more than 1 year—in what country (ies)?	Has never traveled outside of the U.S.	Likes gin and tonic	Can name your State Tree—what is it?	Traveled more than 3 hours to get here
Has a Facebook Profile	Has worked as a natural resource professional—what job?	Shares your birth month	Owns woodland that has been in the family for more than 3 generations	Can operate a chainsaw
Can name three kinds of oak trees—what are they?	Is a bird watcher and has a Life List		Has never sent a text message	Is a vegetarian
Was raised on a farm or ranch—what kind?	Has served in the Armed Forces—which branch?	Has harvested trees from their woodland	Has more than one tattoo	Has performed onstage—what was it?
Has lived in the same town most of their life	Has a current hunting license	Likes to forage for wild mushrooms	Has been hang gliding	Can speak more than one language—which ones?

BINGO TEMPLATE

FIND SOMEONE WHO:

		FREE SPACE		



"I think our humanity is what we have in common, and our common goal of being good stewards to our land."

Marion Sweeney, forest owner, Eugene, Oregon