

Speed Networking to Accelerate Change through Connections



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**A 2011 CLASS PROJECT OF THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
FOR ECOLOGY AND THE ECONOMY**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goal:

- Connect sustainability minded individuals from organizations, businesses, community groups, and public agencies
- Through these relationships, further empower each participant

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Discover shared goals and possible overlap
- Learn about other sustainability projects and their goals
- Build their base of relationships
- Create new alliances among organizations through these relationships

We based this process on four common observations:

- 1) Most valuable capital to accomplish important work is human capital
- 2) Many change agents are trying to do important work but are working alone or in "silos"
- 3) Getting organized around a project takes relationship building
- 4) Most precious resource for each of us is time.

Did we meet the goals and objectives?



YES!

What we did:

We held two speed networking sessions, one with the 2011 Leadership Institute Class and one with Leadership Institute Fellows. For the first session we developed:

- Our script and flow of the event (with time breakdowns)
- A breakdown of supplies needed and roles assigned
- The forms for participants to use
- The signage for sustainability areas



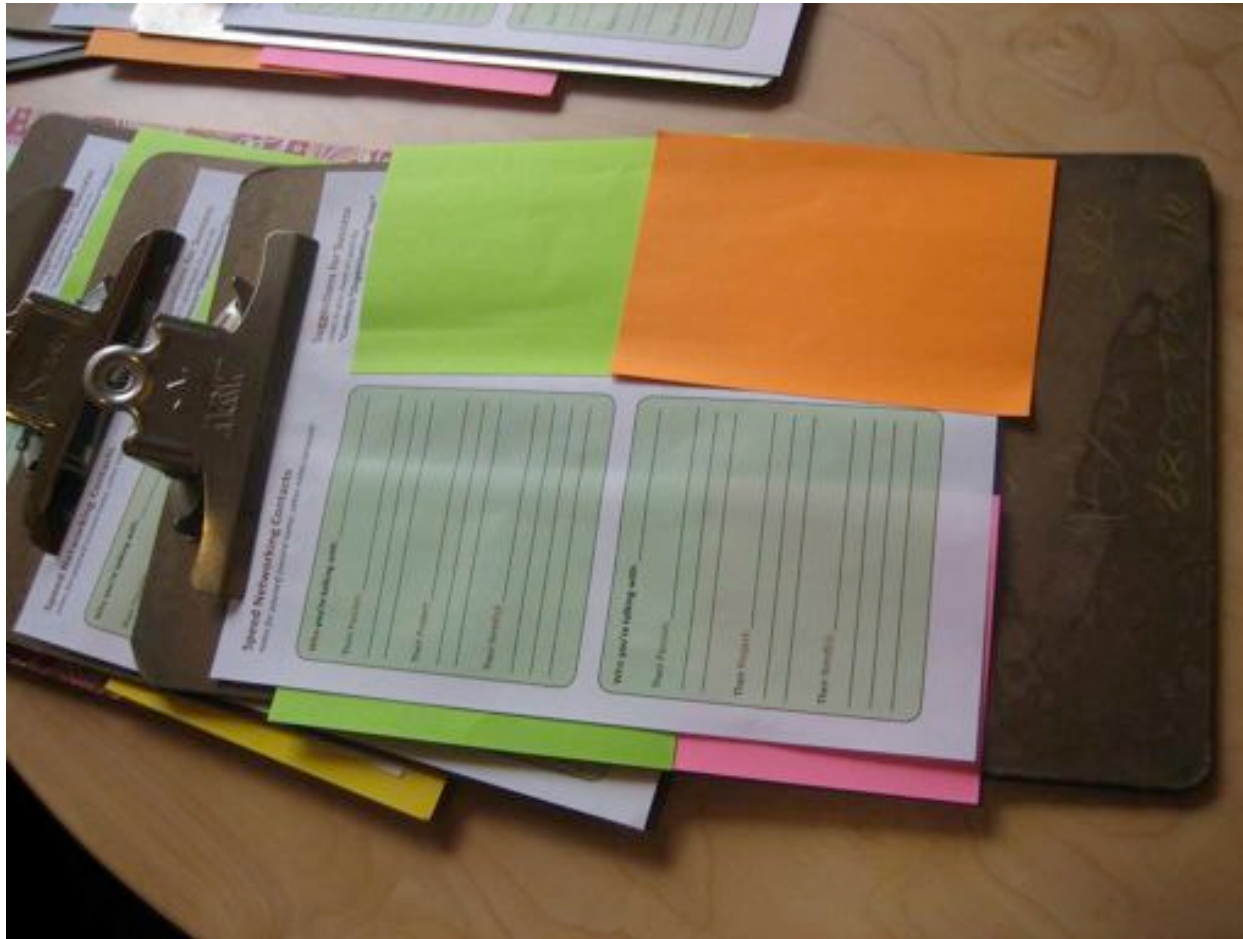
From the first session, we were able to take
feedback and improve our process



We learned that we needed to set up the venue in advance so people could immediately get to work!



We even got fancy and color coded the groupings so people knew exactly where to go



We learned that people needed larger post-its with more room to write



We heard that people needed more **TIME** to write in between their sharing times

The second session involved more steps:

- Creating a budget for food and other supplies
- Finding a venue
- Developing a compelling invitation
- Creating a registration form by working backward from the information we wanted to give participants after the event







The second event was better because participants had more time to not only to talk and write in the sessions, but also afterward.



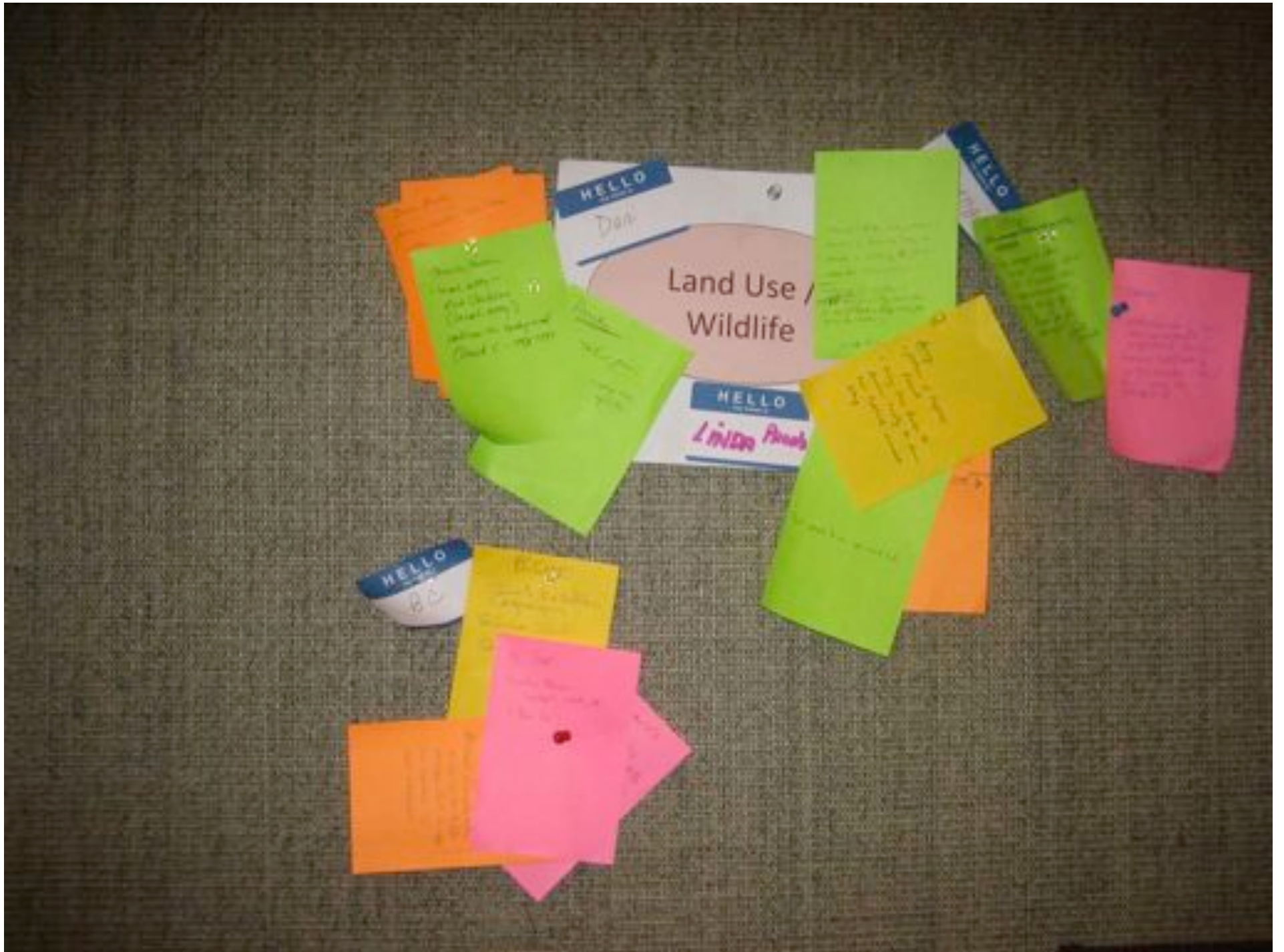
Equity

Talk to community
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Feedback we received:

- People really like the process and find it useful, so much so that...

THEY WANT MORE!!

- They want to meet with more people in an evening. One suggestion was to have two sessions with a break in between, so people would meet double the number of people
- They want more time to rehearse, so maybe add a practice round
- They also suggest that we have time to have each person introduce him/herself at the close of the evening

Unexpected outcome:

- A benefit that participants found was that they were more able, through the limits of time and the practice of repetition, to articulate who they are, what they are doing, and what they need.

Learnings:

- We skimped on the time! Being perhaps impatient people, we didn't allocate enough time for setup, for instructions/practice, for people to write, and for people to meet one another who weren't in groups.

Major Successes:

- The idea worked! People like to get together (go figure!) and talk about what they are doing and learn about others.
- We believe that through events like this, we can create a web of connections, from one individual to another, then one organization to another, to create more synergy meet more goals to sustain our future!

Challenges:

- Time! Finding time to meet with everyone having busy schedules
- Getting serious! Everyone had such a great spirit and sense of humor, that we had riotous laughter at every meeting.

Post Event Notes

We sent all participants an Excel Spreadsheet with not only the names and best contact information for each person, but also notes about their projects and the sustainability areas they are interested/working in.

By having it in a spreadsheet, people can sort by sustainability area, person, or project.

We also collected feedback from participants in the second event as well. These will be incorporated into our final “packet” of instructions of how to sponsor your own Speed Networking event.

What happens next?



**A PACKET OF MATERIALS WILL BE
AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR COMMUNITY
GROUPS TO SPONSOR SPEED NETWORKING
EVENTS BASED ON THIS TEMPLATE**