



## Exercise 1.5

# Weaving Connections



Interface residents and resource professionals may have very different perceptions of issues and their consequences for natural resources. Participants need to understand these perceptions in order to make effective management decisions and communicate with residents in the interface. Recognizing connections between interface problems can help your participants develop strategies for communicating and improving multiple conditions.

This exercise can serve as an icebreaker by getting participants to stand up, move around, work with others, and share ideas with the group. It also may be useful to help the group get to know each other or to get people moving around and talking so they stay interested in the program. This exercise is also ideal for introducing the exercises from other modules.

**Objectives:** Participants will be able to do the following:

1. Actively participate, cooperate, and share ideas.
2. Recognize differences between residents' and natural resource professionals' perceptions of the same issue.
3. Recognize the interconnectedness of interface issues and begin to think about solutions.

**Materials:**

*Presentation 1.2*  
Large ball of brightly colored yarn

**Time:** 20 minutes

1. Use **Presentation 1.2** to explain the main purpose of the exercise to the participants:

*This exercise will help us to better understand how interface issues are interconnected and how residents and natural resource professionals can have very different perceptions of issues and their consequences for natural resources. This understanding can help us develop strategies for dealing with interface issues more effectively and developing working relationships.*

2. Divide the group in half. Ask participants to stand in two concentric circles: a small inner circle and a larger outer circle. Hand the ball of yarn to a person on the outside.
3. Explain to the group that the outside circle represents natural resource professionals and the inside circle represents interface residents. Explain that you will verbally give each of them an interface issue (see list on next page), and they must first describe why they care about it

and then explain the connection between their issue and the previous one. Give the first person two issues and ask them to connect them. As they are doing this, they will wrap the yarn around their wrist and pass it to the next person. Resource professionals (outer circle) will pass to residents (inner circle) and residents will pass it to resource professionals, zigzagging around the circle to the right. You can choose any of the interface issues listed here or use some that are specific to your interface area. Some have more obvious and easy connections than others, so you may want to arrange the order of issues before you begin!

The dialogue could sound something like: “(This issue) is a concern for me because . . . and it’s connected to (previous issue) because . . . .”

4. Once everyone has taken a turn the group should be laced together. Now ask them to unwind by reversing the direction of the yarn while each person states a possible solution for their issue and how it could improve the issue next to them.

The dialogue could sound something like: “One approach to improve (give issue) is . . . and that could help improve (previous issue) by . . . .”

5. When the exercise is finished it may be valuable to discuss the connections or perceptions that participants found interesting or surprising. Are there any issues that didn’t make sense to connect together? Are there additional issues that should have been mentioned?

### **Interface Issues (add your own as well):**

water quality	urban heat island effect
water quantity	wildfire
non-native invasive plants	increased land value
non-native invasive animals	sprawl
nuisance wildlife	endangered animal or plant
forest fragmentation	new highway construction
air pollution	hunting regulations
prescribed burning	new shopping areas
sense of place	forest pathogens
wildlife habitat	increased storm runoff
groundwater recharge	defensible space
timber harvesting	scenic views

### **Summary**

Interface issues cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. The connections between interface problems create unique challenges and opportunities for resource professionals. Understanding these connections can help resource professionals influence interface conditions more effectively. This exercise encourages participants to think about how resource professionals and interface residents perceive issues differently, how these issues are connected, and to consider how solutions can improve multiple issues.