

Welcome!



V E N

**Virginia Environmental Literacy
Network**

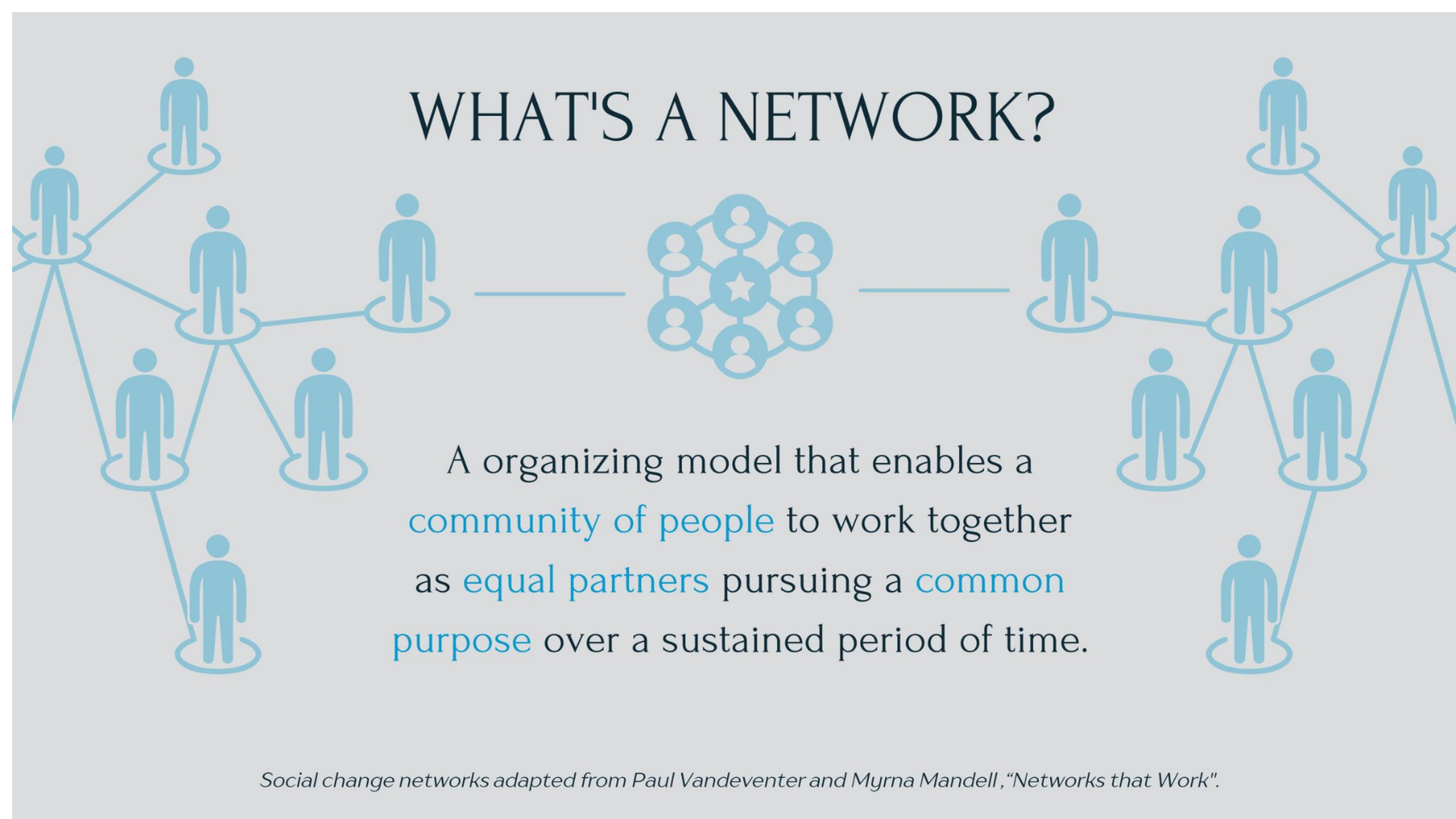


Who are we?

VEN is a NETWORK representing strategic partners with a common goal to support teachers & their students in developing environmental literacy.



WHAT'S A NETWORK?



A organizing model that enables a community of people to work together as equal partners pursuing a common purpose over a sustained period of time.



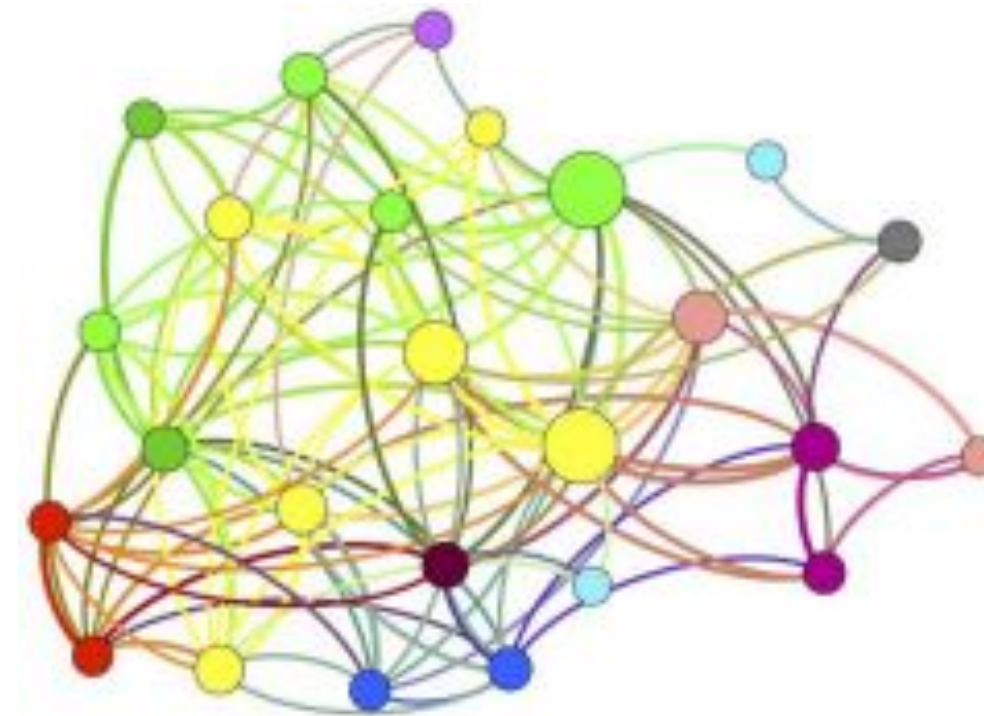
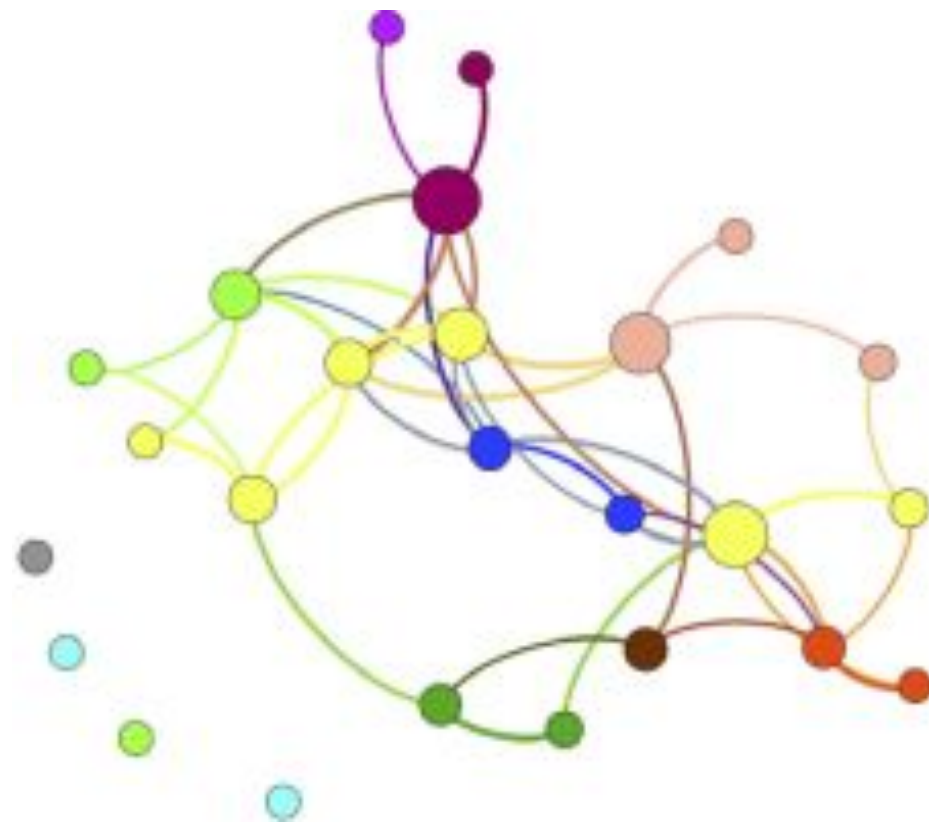
REGIONAL OUTDOOR LEARNING NETWORK

DE | MD | PA | VA

REINFORCE | CONNECT | ALIGN | RESOURCE
**the existing environmental literacy ecosystem of
people, organizations, agencies, networks, and associations**

Vision: All students graduate environmentally literate!

Network Vision for Virginia



Now:

- Multiple community networks with an EE focus
- Some connections among the community members

Building:

- Increased connections with increased network members
- Collective efforts

"When groups of people share their different perspectives & blend their ideas together, new possibilities arise that could not have been predicted" (Impact Networks).



"ego-system awareness"

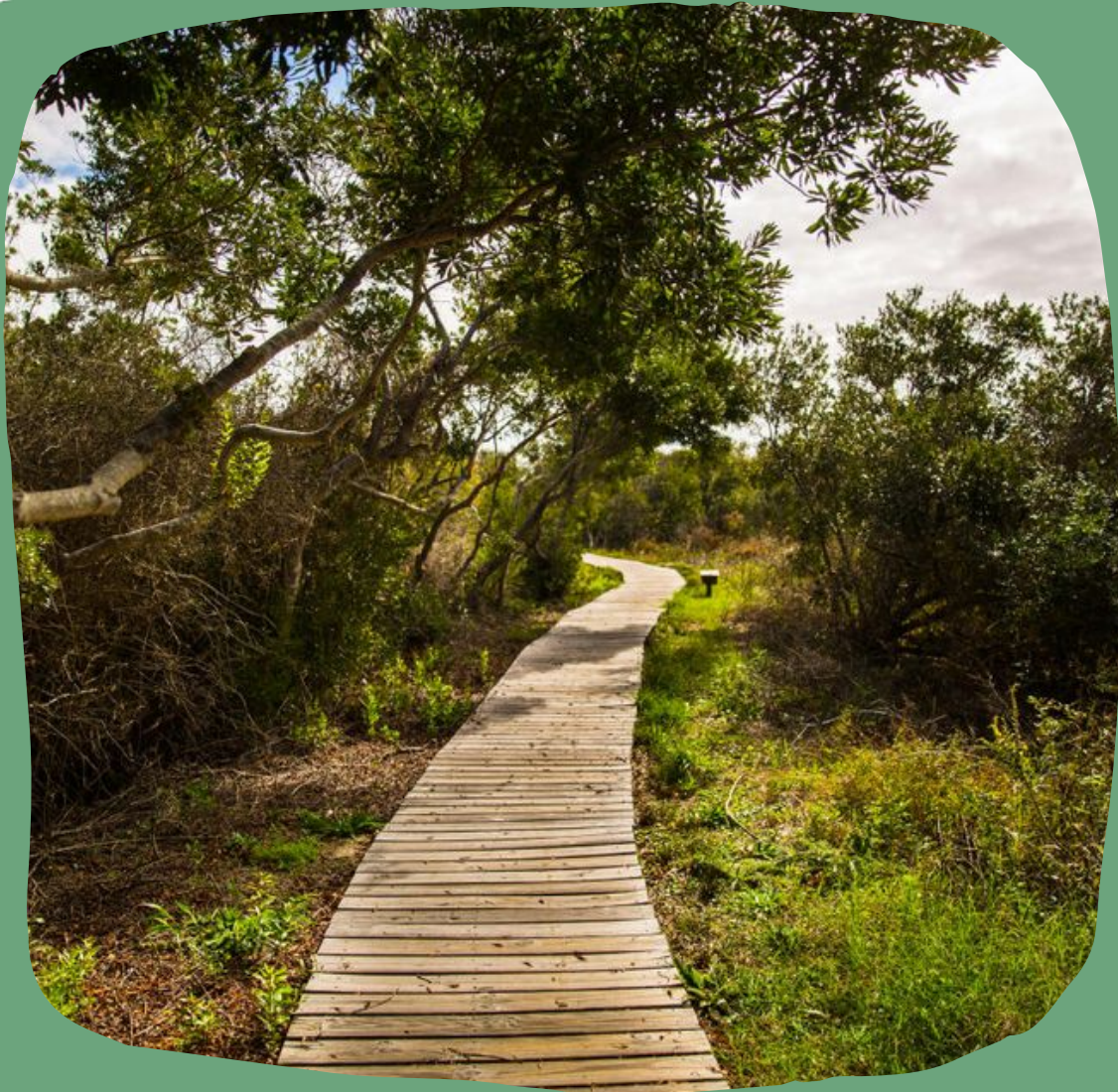
"eco-system awareness"



“ Alone we can do so little; together we
can do so much. ”



Helen Keller



VEN Goal

To ensure **every person** in Virginia has **access to high-quality environmental education**, including but not limited to outdoor education experiences & opportunities for civic engagement **through the school curriculum & within local communities.**

VEN Strategic Partners

1

Formal & Community-based
Educators, Non-profit EE
Organizations

2

Universities, Community
Organizations, & Businesses

What we do

The purpose of our state network is to **strengthen relationships & collaboration across state-wide formal & non-formal networks of educators & stakeholders to cultivate the conditions for equitable environmental literacy efforts to grow & thrive.**





An environmentally literate citizen has the skills, knowledge, & inclination to make well-informed choices as a member of a community.





“ Environmental literacy is having the knowledge, skills, & dispositions to solve problems & resolve issues individually & collectively that sustain ecological, economic, & social stability. ”



Major VEN Objectives

1

Create a **communication network** intended to support all educators with environmental education instruction aligned to the Science Standards of Learning.

2

Develop a **state-level environmental literacy strategy**.

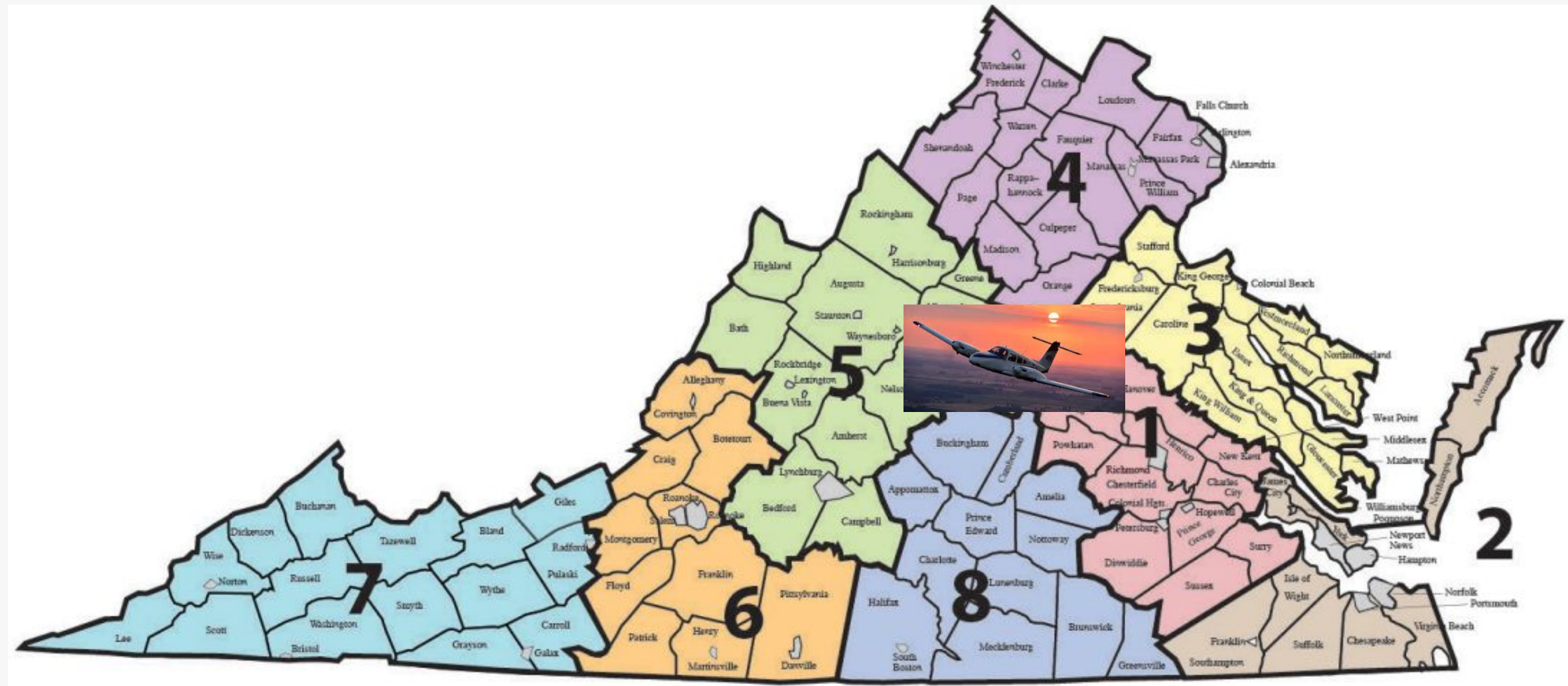
3

Support divisions & schools to enhance outdoor experiences that build scientific & engineering practices while learning environmental concepts.

Regional Hubs Purpose

CONNECT, COMMUNICATE, COLLABORATE

to enhance environmental education



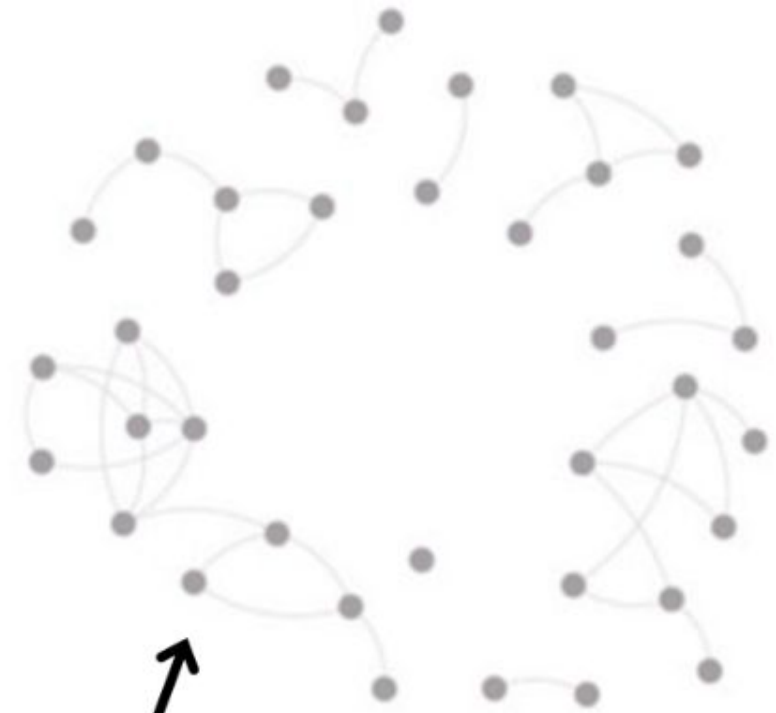
A network diagram with various nodes and connections. A large white node with a dark blue center is prominent at the top center. Other nodes are in shades of blue, black, and grey. The background is light grey with faint circular patterns.

Activity

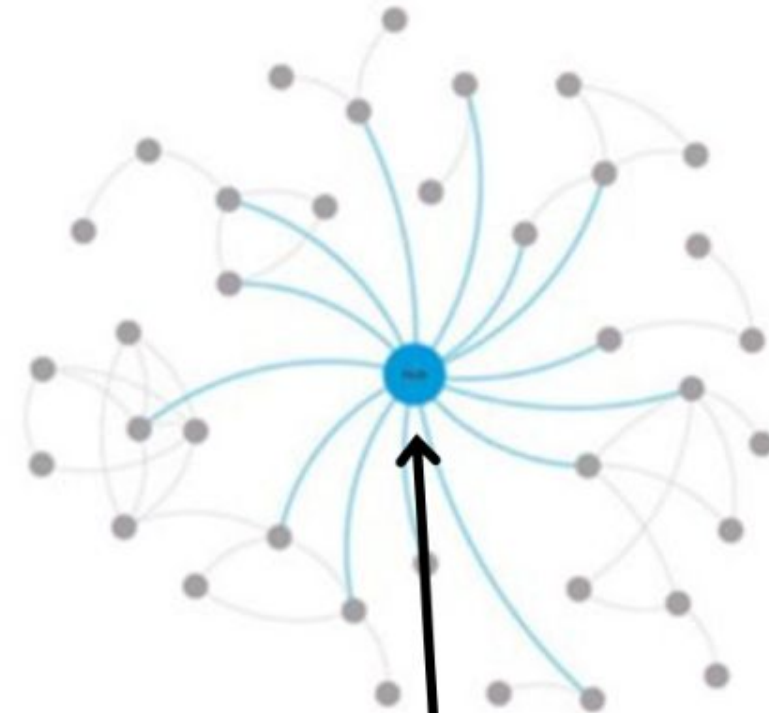
**What does your network look like?
Who are your ELit partners?**

Network Evolution & Terminology

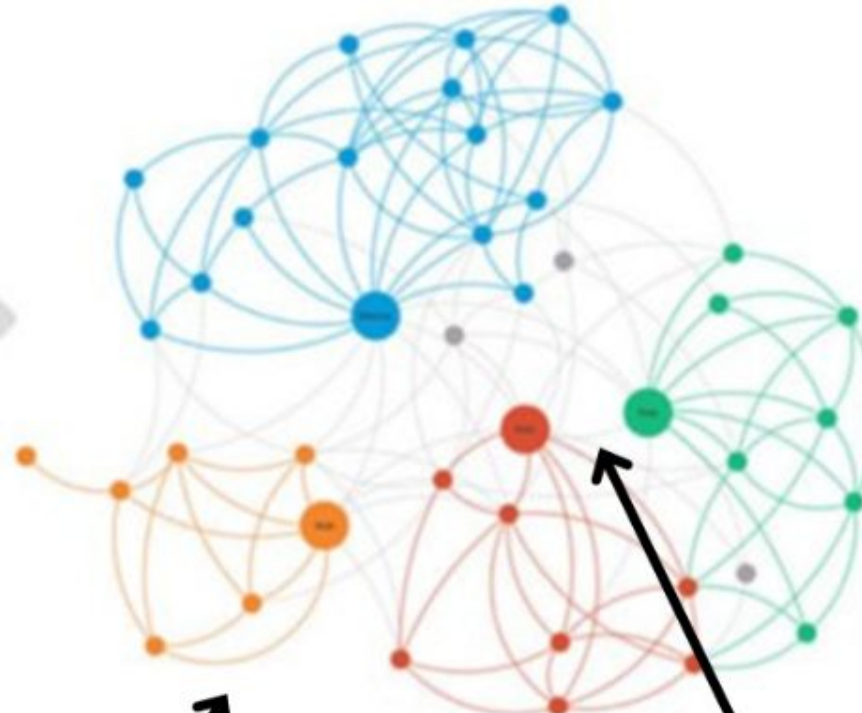
1. Scattered fragments



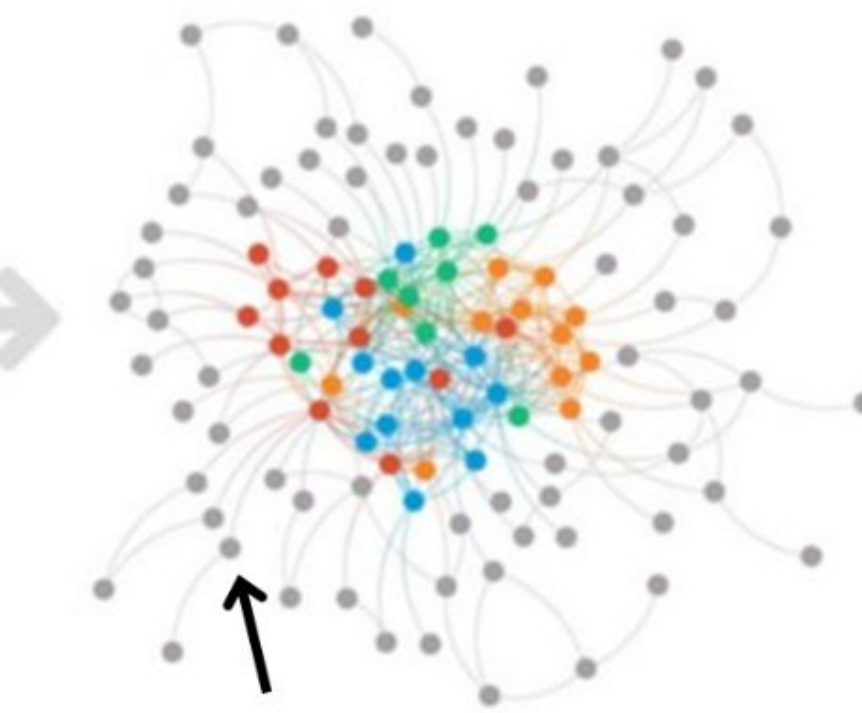
2. Hub and spoke





3. Multi-hub



4. Core/periphery



 Nodes (People)
 Links/Ties (Connections, Weak & Strong)

Hub
(Highly Connected Nodes)

Clusters

Boundary Spanners/Bridgers
(nodes that connect 2 or more clusters acting as bridges b/w clusters)

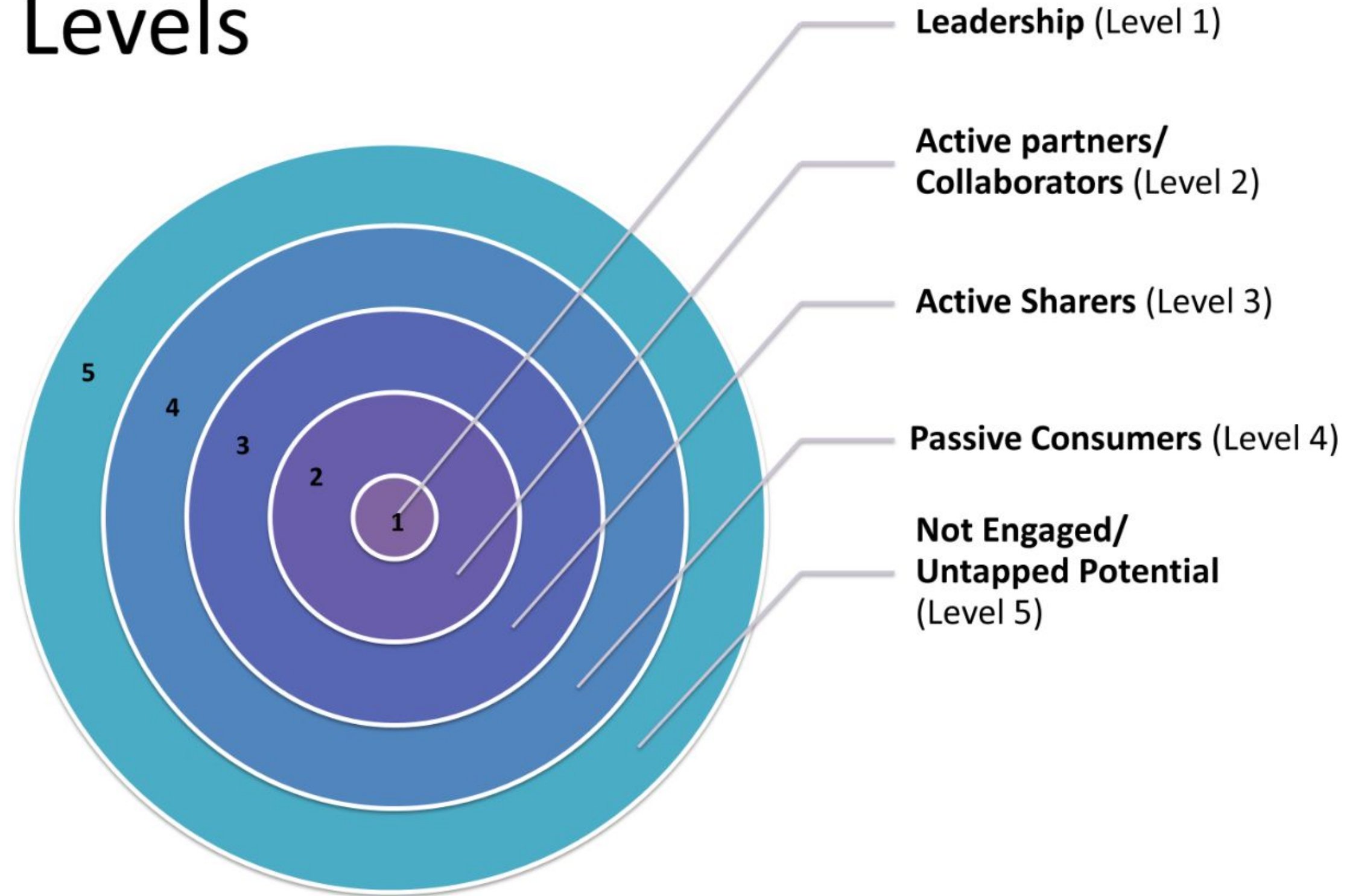
Broker (liaisons that connect otherwise disconnected parts of the network)

Increasing Network Engagement

“Networks thrive when members are actively engaged—building relationships, sharing insights, developing solutions or working on projects to achieve a common goal.”

Networklmapct.org

Network Participation Levels



VEN Network Structure

Working together to advance the network's purpose & goals.

Regional Hubs Leaders/Weavers

Steering Committee

(aka Core Team, Tapestry Team, Design Team)

Shapes scope of work through shared governance



Network Coordinator/Staff

(Management Team)

Handles operations



Regional Hub #1



Regional Hub #2

Tackles shared objectives & leverages local expertise

Regional Hub #3



Working Groups/
Committees

Working Groups/
Committees

Working Groups/
Committees

Working Groups/
Committees





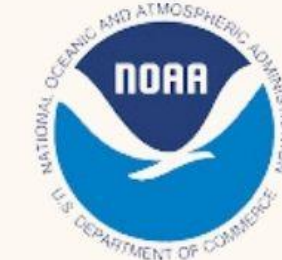
STEP 1: ABOUT VEN

Learn about VEN History, purpose, structure, and more!

[VEN Overview](#)

[Structure & Roles](#)

[Operating Procedures- Coming Soon](#)



STEP 2: CONNECT & LEARN MORE

Learn more about Networks here!

Reach out to Candace & Bianca at ven@virginiaee.org for more information

[Drop into one of our virtual sessions to connect](#)
(2nd Wednesday of the month at 10am)

STEP 3: TAKE ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know how VEN can add value to your work!

Scan the QR Code Below to begin your VEN onboarding journey!



**Cultivating a Network Mindset
Training Modules**

[Video Module](#)
Cultivating a Network Mindset:
Exploring Networks



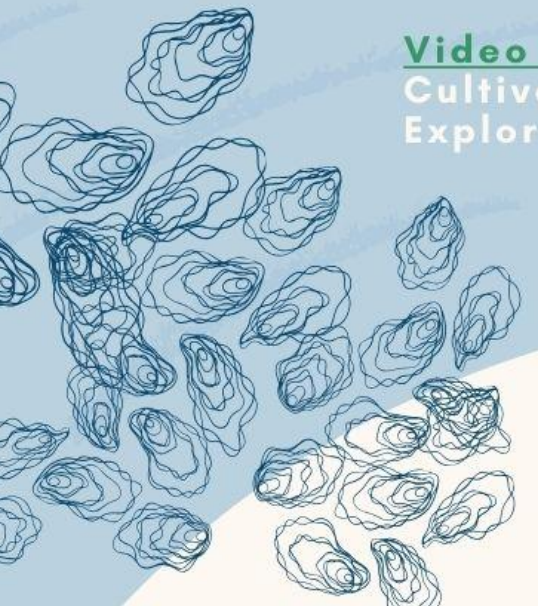
[Video Module](#)
Cultivating a Network Mindset:
Exploring Network Leadership



[Video Module](#)
Systems & Systems Change



**WE ENVISION HEALTHY, ENGAGED, AND
PREPARED YOUTH NURTURING OUR LAND &
WATERS**





“

Coming together is a beginning;
staying together is progress;
& working together is success.

”



Henry Ford



We look forward to
working together

VEN@VIRGINIAEE.ORG

ALL ABOUT ME

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET FROM THIS COALITION?

WHAT ARE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY NEEDS?

FUN FACT ABOUT YOU

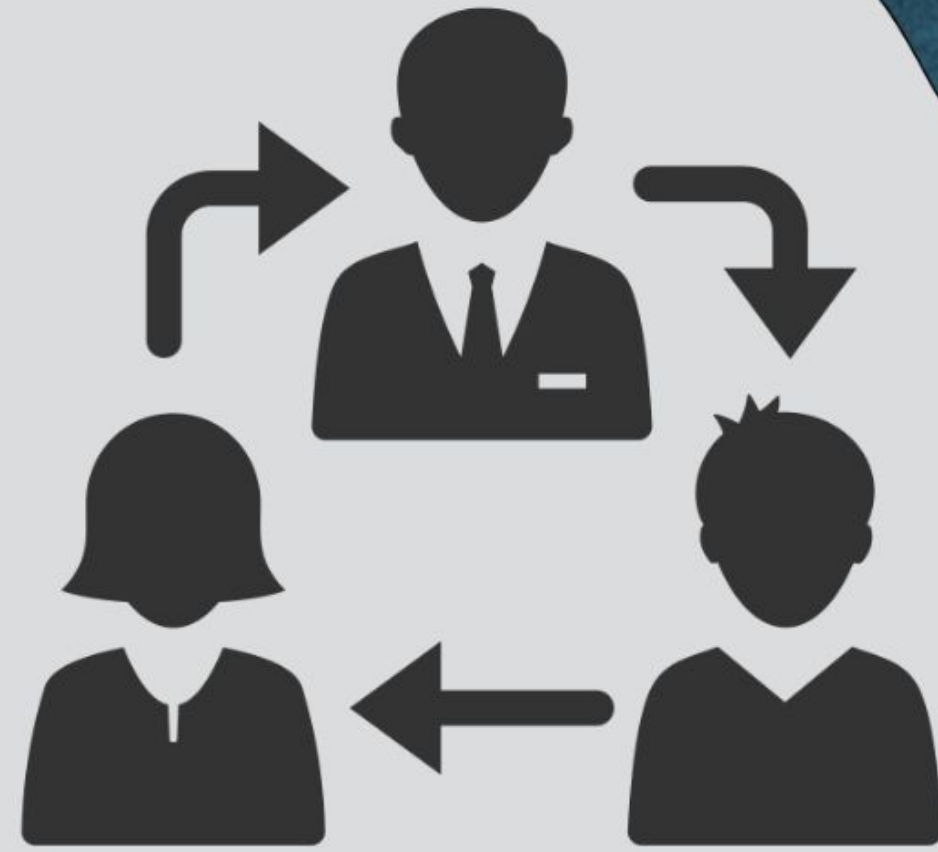
NAME

ORGANIZATION / ROLE

CONTACT INFO

PHOTO OR BITMOJI OR GIF

VEN NETWORK STRUCTURE & ROLES



Brief History

2014 - New Chesapeake Bay Agreement: Environmental literacy emphasized for ALL Virginia school divisions

2015 - Virginia Environmental Education Association - VAAEE is created

2018 - Virginia Department of Education adopts new science standards that include an emphasis on inquiry-based learning & incorporating environmental education.

2023 - First Regional Hub launched

2020 - Regional Landscape Assessment - findings include the need for better connection, alignment, & cohesiveness of the environmental education community at the state-level.

2021 - Virginia Environmental Literacy Network - VEN is formed

2023 - Office of Environmental Education restarted at Dept. Conservation & Recreation



Network Models: 6 Common Examples

(source: visible network labs)



THE HUB & SPOKE MODEL

One of the most common network forms, it is defined as having a single central node, with many others connecting to it.

NETWORK OF NETWORKS

In this more strategic structure, sub-groups are formed & connect to the network core and other sub-groups via bridging nodes.



DECENTRALIZED MODEL

The opposite of the hub-and-spoke, this network structure lacks any central nodes, with connections widely dispersed.



OPEN NETWORKS

An open network isn't dense, connecting to numerous sub-groups and having many opportunities for new connections.



RING/CHAIN NETWORKS

In this type of network, each node is connected to 1-2 other nodes, forming a chain of connections without much density.

CLOSED NETWORKS

A closed network is very dense, with nearly all possible connections present between nodes, but few sub-groups.

