Welcome!

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.

Social change networks adapted from Paul Vandeventer and Myrna Mandell, “Networks that Work”.
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
What does your network look like? Who are your ELit partners?
Network Evolution & Terminology

1. Scattered fragments
   - Nodes (People)
   - Links/Ties (Connections, Weak & Strong)

2. Hub and spoke
   - Hub (Highly Connected Nodes)

3. Multi-hub
   - Clusters
   - Boundary Spanners/Bridgers (nodes that connect 2 or more clusters acting as bridges b/w clusters)

4. Core/periphery
   - Broker (liaisons that connect otherwise disconnected parts of the network)

Building Smart Communities through Network Weaving, June Holley & Valdis Krebs
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

- Leadership (Level 1)
- Active partners/ Collaborators (Level 2)
- Active Sharers (Level 3)
- Passive Consumers (Level 4)
- Not Engaged/ Untapped Potential (Level 5)
**VEN Network Structure**

*Working together to advance the network’s purpose & goals.*

**Steering Committee**
(aka Core Team, Tapestry Team, Design Team)

Shapes scope of work through shared governance

**Network Coordinator/Staff**
(Management Team)

Handles operations

**Regional Hubs Leaders/Weavers**

- **Regional Hub #1**
- **Regional Hub #2**
  Tackles shared objectives & leverages local expertise
- **Regional Hub #3**

**Working Groups/Committees**

- Working Groups/Committees
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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
Reach out to Candace & Bianca at venevirginiaee.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!

Cultivating a Network Mindset
Training Modules
Video Module
Cultivating a Network Mindset: Exploring Networks

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

Video Module
Systems & Systems Change

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET FROM THIS COALITION?</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT ARE YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY NEEDS?</td>
<td>ORGANIZATION / ROLE</td>
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<td>FUN FACT ABOUT YOU</td>
<td>CONTACT INFO</td>
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VEN NETWORK STRUCTURE & ROLES
Brief History

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

2015 - Virginia Environmental Education Association (VAEE) is created

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

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

2023 - First Regional Hub launched
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.