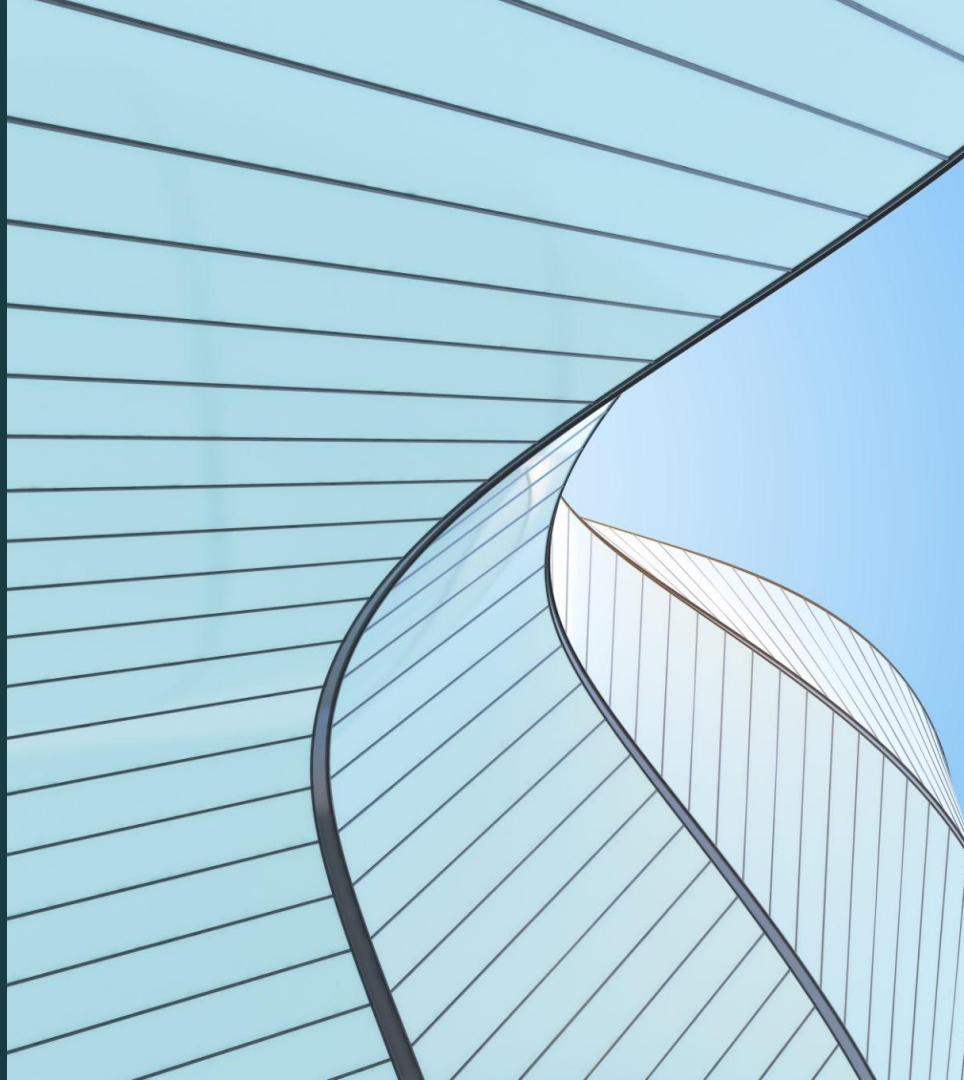
2025 Chesapeake Watershed Forum
November 7, 2025

Visualizing and Strengthening Networks with Mapping

Presenter: Meredith Lemke, Chesapeake Bay Program
Moderator: Wuillam Urvina, Choose Clean Water Coalition



Introductions

A bit about me...

- Environmental Management Staffer
- Chesapeake Steward Map Manager
- William & Mary Alum
- Nature lover, amateur bird nerd
- Dabbler in many artistic hobbies!

A bit about you...

- Title, Organization
- What region do you work in?
- How far did it take you to get here?

Email: lemkem@chesapeake.org
LinkedIn: Meredith Lemke

Agenda

Network Theory 101

Intro to Network Visualization

- ➔ What is the Chesapeake Steward Map?
- ➔ Challenges and Opportunities

Build Connections – Right Now!

Gratitude

Objectives

KNOWLEDGE

Network Theory 101

Challenges, Opportunities

Trust and Relationships

Network Visualization

Network Mapping

SKILLS

Basic understanding of how to use the Chesapeake Steward Map

Networking skills to take with you and use throughout the Forum!

RELATIONSHIPS

Build connections with folks in this room!

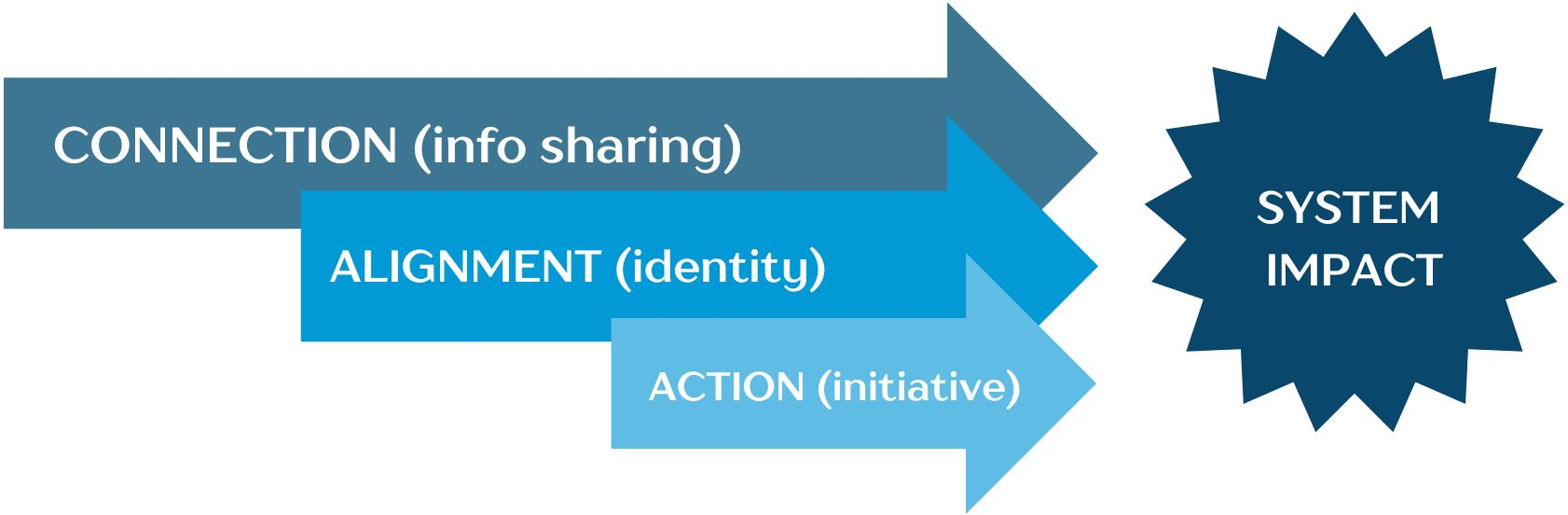
Network Theory 101

WHAT'S A NETWORK?

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

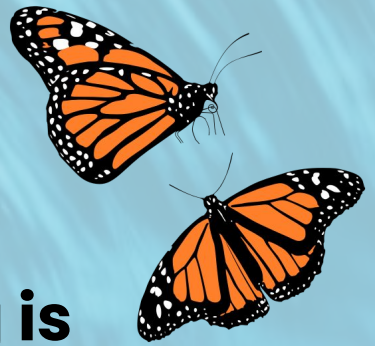
Social change networks adapted from Paul Vandeventer and Myrna Mandell ,"Networks that Work".

Network Theory of Change



Adapted from Converge and Network Impact (converge.net; networkimpact.org)

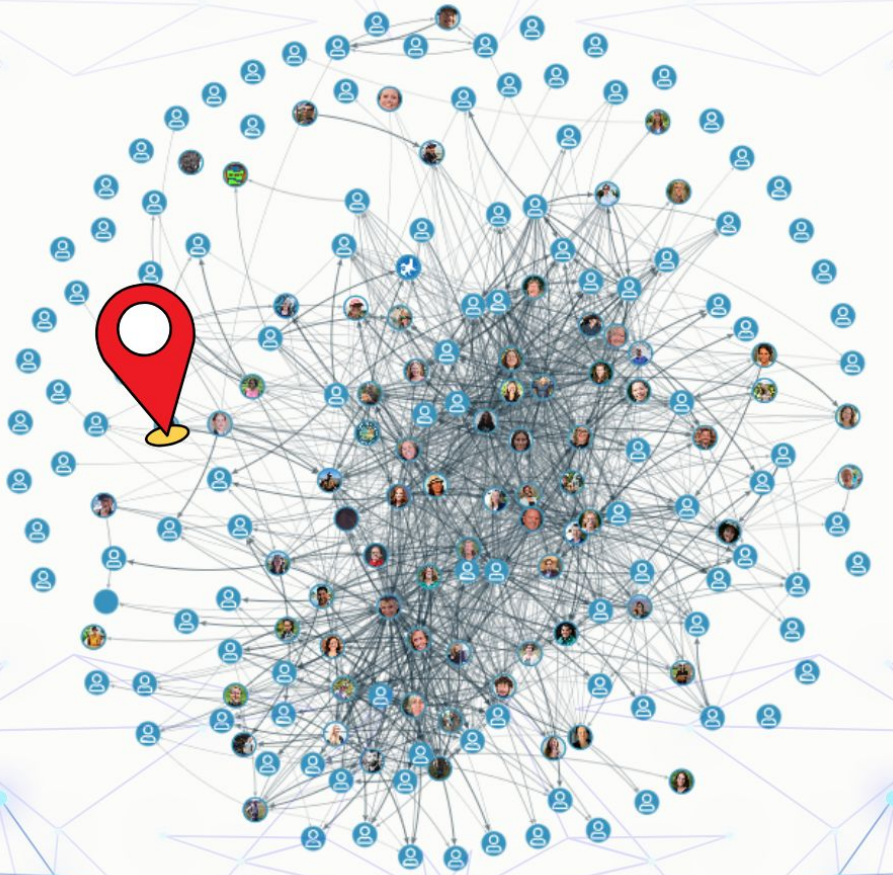
The Network Mindset Shift



"To adopt a network mindset is to embrace the reality that **everything is connected**—that the actions of individuals, organizations, and sectors affect one another in profound and often-unexpected ways. "

— David Ehrlichman, *author, Impact Networks*

YOU ARE HERE



"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"

Based on work of Jane Wei-Skillern, Marty Kooistra, and David Ehrlichman

Based on the work of Jane Wei Skillern, David Ehrlichmann

Characteristics of a mindset based in hierarchy, ego, or self-advancement

Top-down leadership
Centralized decision-making
Resources/ achievements are restricted to an individual or organization
Priorities: Organizational/individual profit, growth, or status
Tasks and strategies are directed, prescriptive
Reliant on systems of control

Characteristics of a **network mindset**

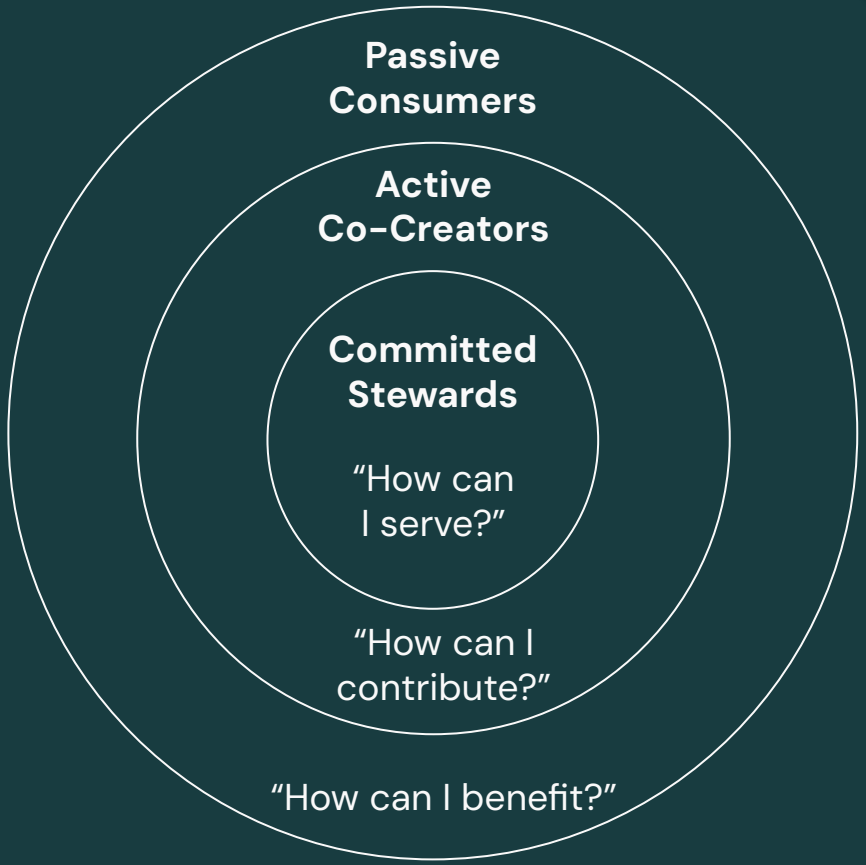
Leaders serve, facilitate, and support
Collective decision-making
Information, resources, credit, and achievements are shared
Priority: Scaling impact towards a common purpose
Strategies emerge, adapt, and grow
Relationship and trust oriented
Reliant on collaboration

There are many different types of networks.

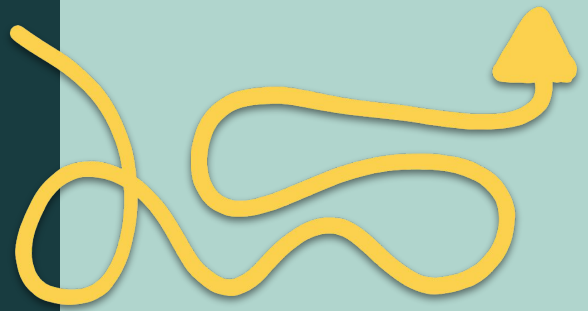
Networks can vary by:

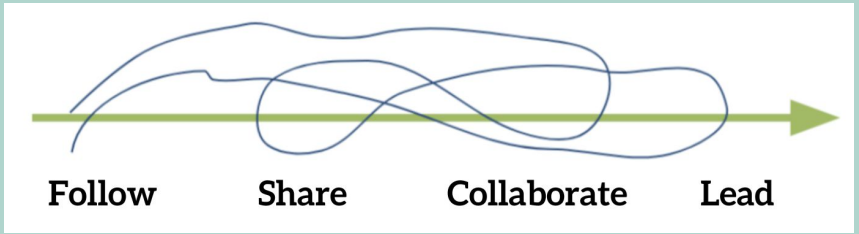
- Purpose
- Geographic scale
- Time scale
- Members and audience types:
  - Academia
  - Local, state, and federal agencies
  - Private companies
  - Individuals
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Etc...
- And more!

Network engagement varies...



and is nonlinear!





(And that's normal!)

Based on the work of Michael Bachmann, Fabian Pfortmüller

Are you a part of a network?

Does your network embody any of the network mindset characteristics we've discussed so far?

Where has your network helped increase impact?

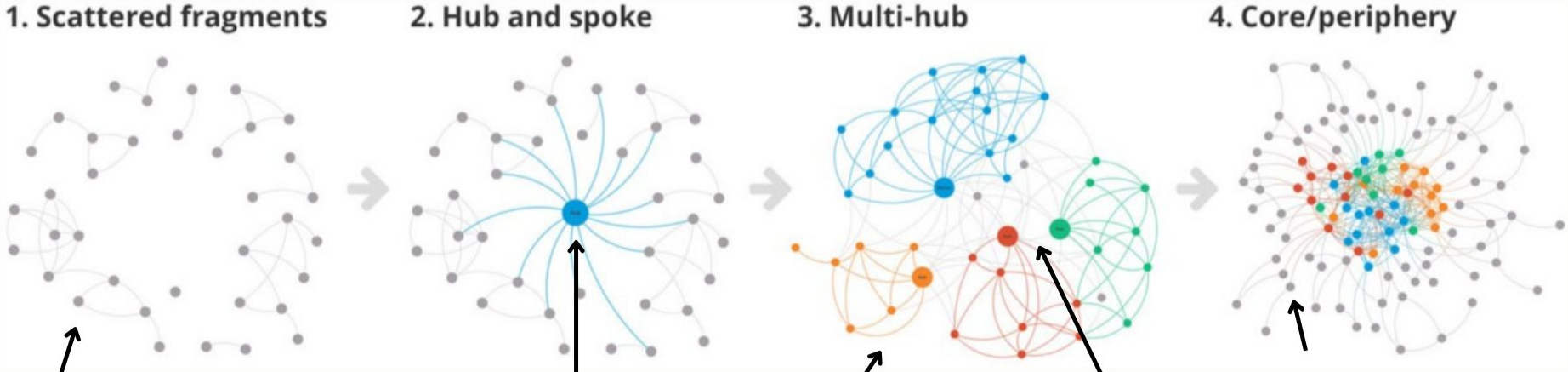
5 Minute Stretch Break / Chatting Question

What sort of digital tools do your networks use to collaborate and stay connected?

For example:
social media platforms,
newsletters, maps, mentimeter,
virtual games, etc.

Intro to Network Visualization

Network Evolution & Terminology



Nodes (People)

Links/Ties (Connections, Weak & Strong)

Hub (Highly Connected Nodes)

Clusters

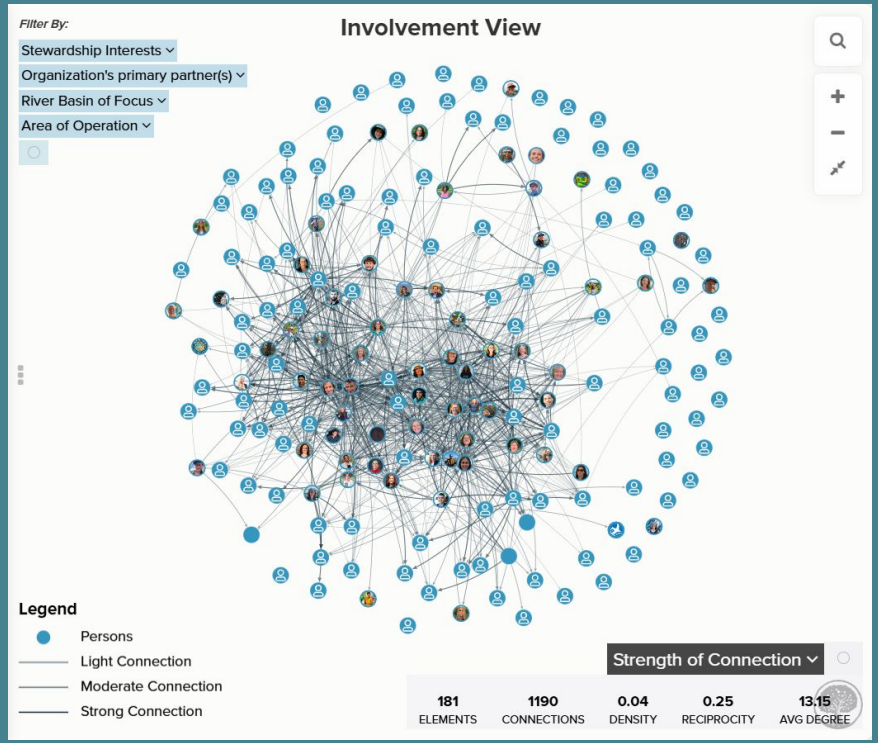
Broker (liaisons that connect otherwise disconnected parts of the network)

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

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

Chesapeake Steward Map

Stewardship Network Visualisation across the Mid-Atlantic



Project History

- GIT Funded Project in partnership with Local Concepts LLC – network building experts Christy Gabbard & Sonia Keiner
- One-year contract began late 2023, extended until February 2025
- Monthly steering committee meetings guided development of map purpose, vision, and outreach

LOCAL CONCEPTS

Chesapeake Bay Trust

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Purpose – Why visualize a network of stewards?

Increase connections and collaborative partnerships among stewards across the Chesapeake region by identifying hubs and gaps in connectivity and highlighting opportunities to facilitate strategic connections for sharing knowledge and resources.

How does it work?

1. Users follow the Opt-In link and input their email address. They will then receive a link to a "Personal Dashboard."
    a. We recommend favoriting the link to your personal dashboard so you can update your questionnaire and connections easily at any time.
    b. Once you're on the map you can also request your personal dashboard link here.
2. Fill out the questionnaire in your personal dashboard **about yourself** (not about your organization).
3. Go to the connections tab and **indicate your level of connection** with who is on the map.
4. Explore all of the different views!

Note: "Views" are the different ways the data is visualized on the Map!

Now you try!

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with **other nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

Now you try!

1. Open:
   www.chesapeakebay.net/projects/chesapeake-steward-map
2. Click the **Chesapeake Steward Map Exploration Link**
   (top right corner of webpage)
3. Then you are already in the **Directory View**
4. Use the **Filters** (top left corner of the Map)
5. *Tip:* Click "Z" on keyboard to remove all filters at once, OR uncheck filters one by one

Now you try!

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with **other nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

Demo Case:

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with other **nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

- Stewardship Interests: Conservation and/or Restoration

Demo Case:

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with other **nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

- Stewardship Interests: Conservation and/or Restoration
- River basin of focus

Demo Case:

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with other **nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

- Stewardship Interests: Conservation and/or Restoration
- River basin of focus
- Area of operation

Demo Case:

Casey works in a nonprofit focused on **tree planting** and is looking to partner with other **nonprofits** that have **expertise around forest buffers** and **stream health** in **Maryland**.

How can she filter the **directory view** to identify practitioners that work on that subject area?

- Stewardship Interests: Conservation and/or Restoration
- River basin of focus
- Area of operation
- Organization's primary partner(s)

YOU ARE HERE
Connect with me throughout the Forum and beyond if you would like to dive deeper!

Challenges and Opportunities

Discussion Question

How have networks helped your organization overcome a challenge or revealed an opportunity?

From Networks to Network*ing*...

From Networks to Network*ing*...

(but first a brief tangent about puppetry)

From Networks to Network*ing*...

Networking is not:

- shmoozing
- just chatting

Networking is:

- building relationships
- fostering collaboration
- mutually beneficial

From Networks to Network*ing*...

Five Steps to getting the most out of networking at the Watershed Forum:

1. **Shift your mindset**
   from the idea that networking is about shmoozing, to networking is about finding ways to mutually benefit/ support a community

From Networks to Network*ing*...

Five Steps to getting the most out of networking at the Watershed Forum:

1. **Shift your mindset**
   from the idea that networking is about shmoozing, to networking is about finding ways to mutually benefit/ support a community

2. **Have a purpose**
   Ex) to strengthen and grow the network on the Map to make it more useful to our regional stewardship community

Build Connections – Right Now!

1. **Shift your mindset**
2. **Have a purpose**
3. **Stay present**
4. **Give space**
5. **Seek common ground**

Build Connections – Right Now!

1. **Shift your mindset**
2. **Have a purpose**
3. **Stay present**
4. **Give space**
5. **Seek common ground**

Activity: Stand up!

- Groups of three
- Practice building connections
  1. Introduce yourself
  2. Establish a point of connection or common ground
  3. Transition to a professional topic

Questions:

- Why did you choose to come to the Watershed Forum?
- What is one challenge that you or your organization is facing, that you believe collaboration can help solve?

Thank you!

Christy, Sonia, Marisa, Laura, Julie, Renee, Jenny, Wuill, and so many more!

All of the Map Ambassadors, CRC Staff, and Forum hosts!

And all of YOU!

Want to learn more?

My Contact Info:

- Meredith Lemke, CRC/ CBP, *lemkem@chesapeake.org*

Follow Up Steward Map Info Session

- November 21, 10:00–11:00am (Zoom)

Network Science Training Session

- January 13, 2:00–4:00pm (Hybrid)