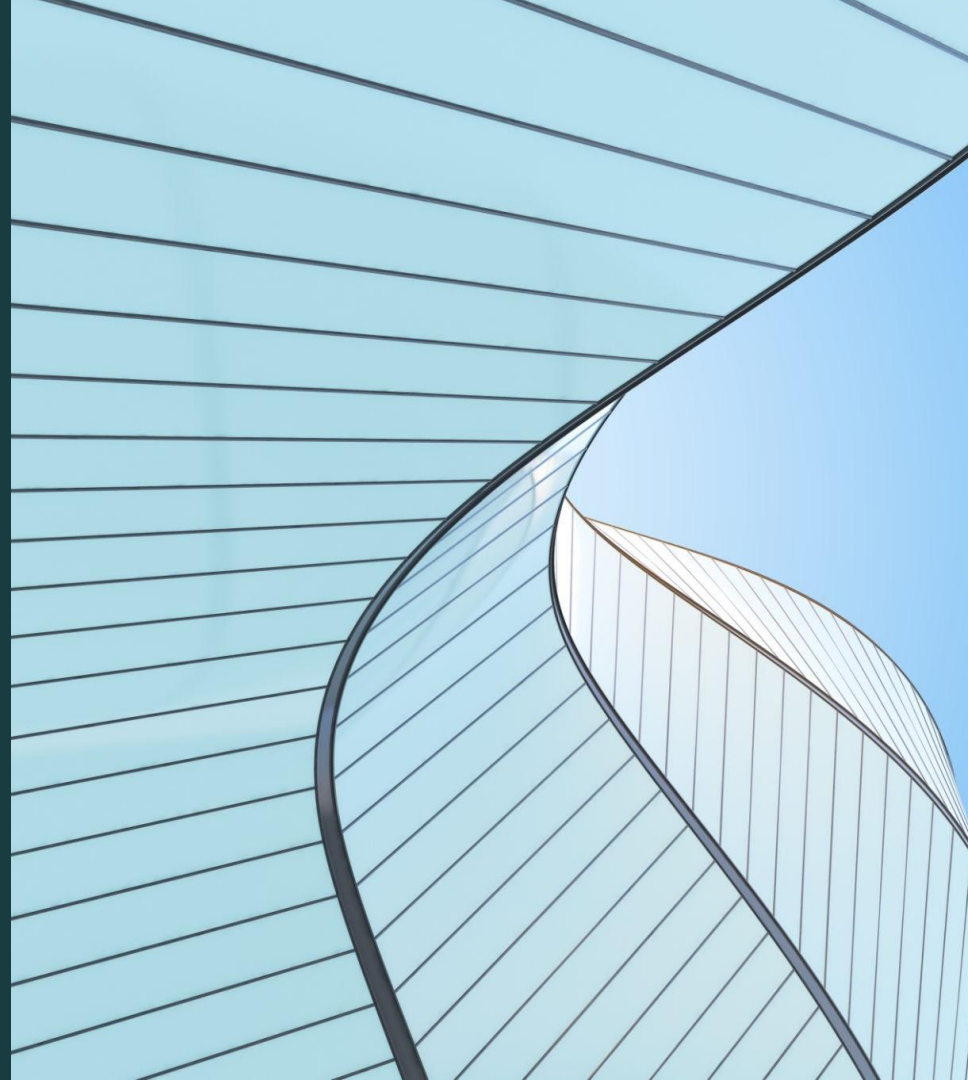


June 25, 2026

Mapping Connections: Network Science and Collaborative Change

Presenter: Meredith Lemke, Chesapeake Bay Program



Agenda

Network Theory 101

- What is a network?
 - The Network Mindset Shift
-

Intro to Network Visualization

- What is the Chesapeake Steward Map?
-

Question & Answers



Network Theory 101

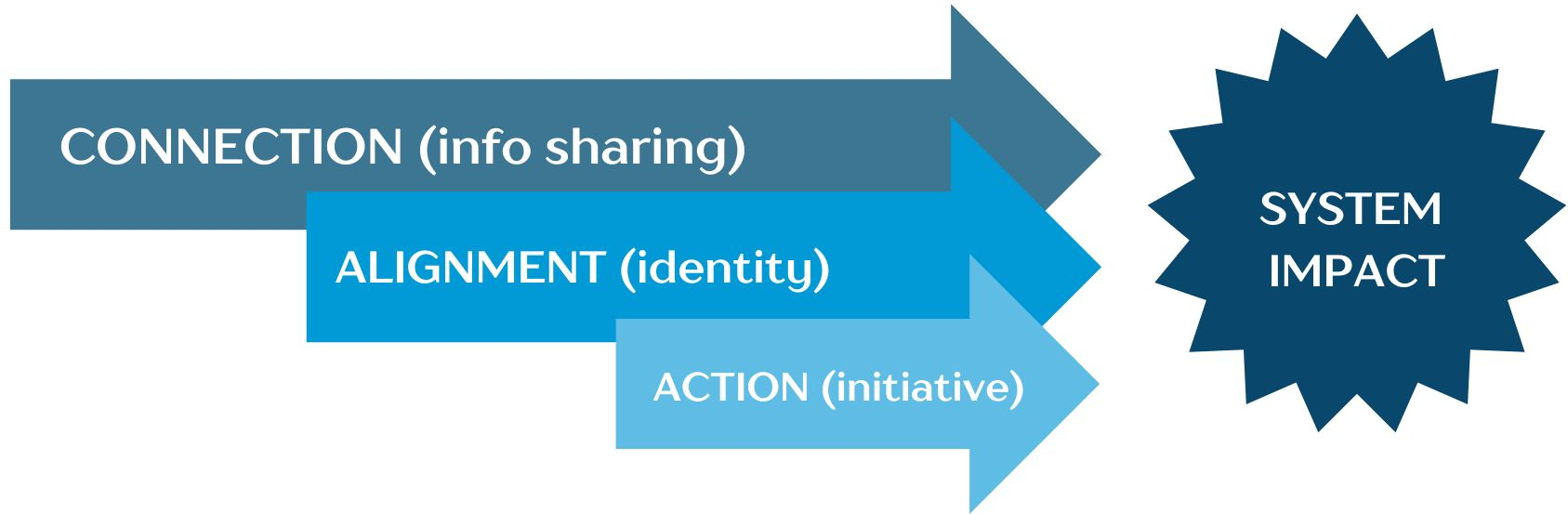
WHAT'S A NETWORK?



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.



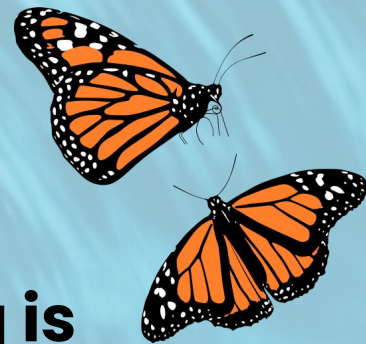
Network Theory of Change



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. ”

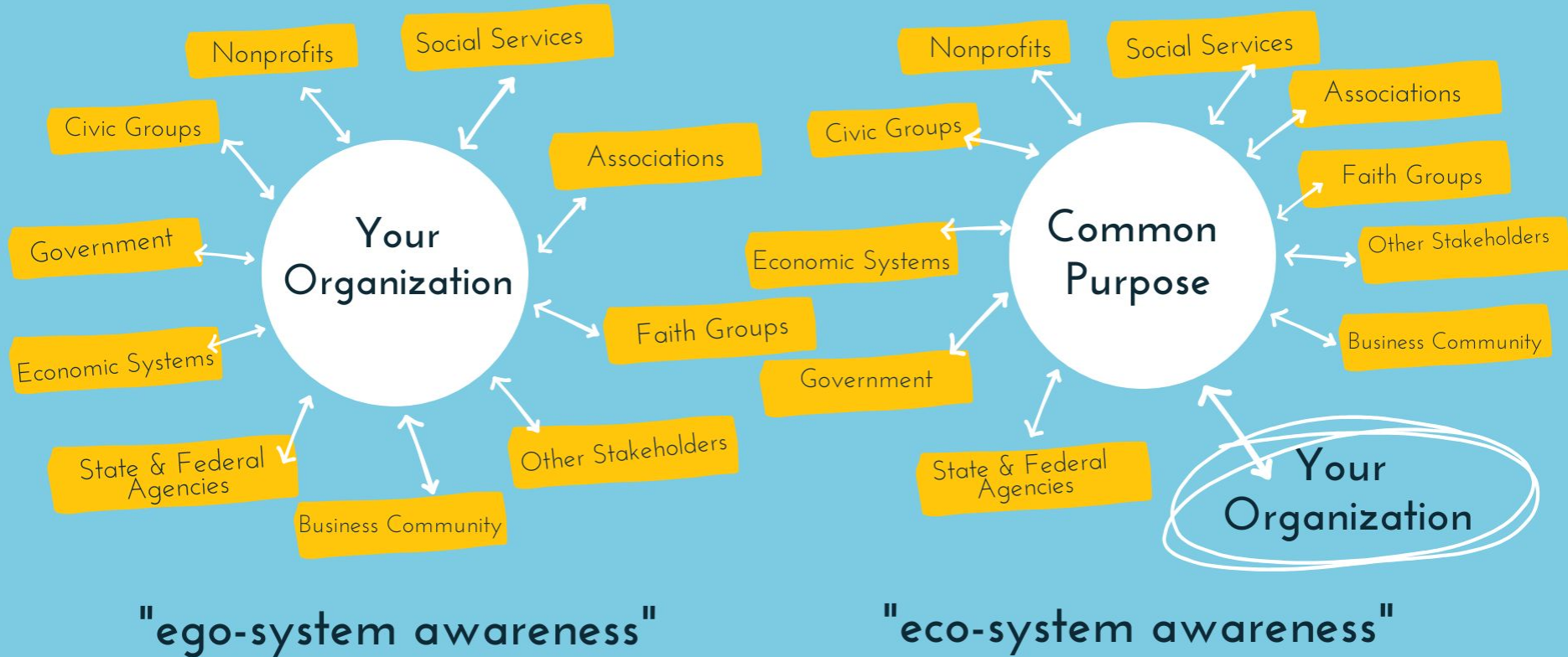
— David Ehrlichman, *author, Impact Networks*



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).



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

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!



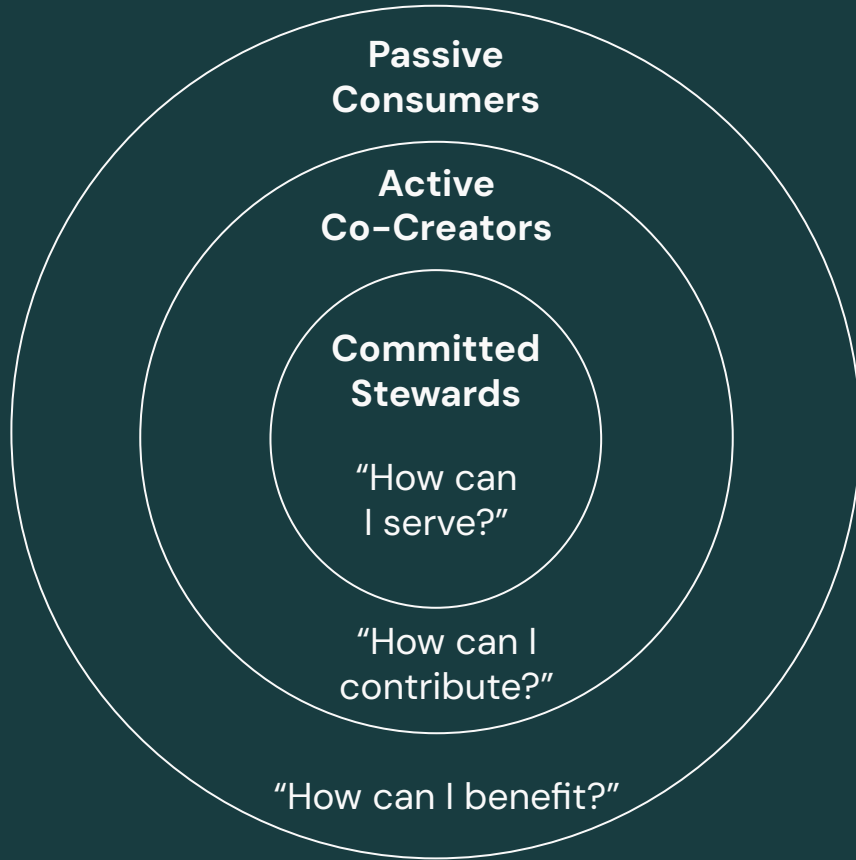
Conflict Mindset

Mutual distrust
Territorial battles
Disagreements may be taken personally
Information and resource hoarding
Uneven or intransparent power dynamics
Very challenging to collaborate to find compromise or solutions

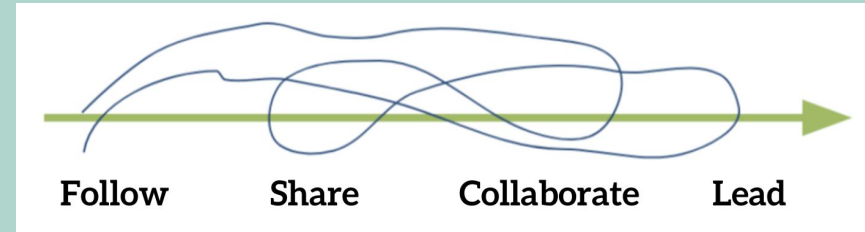
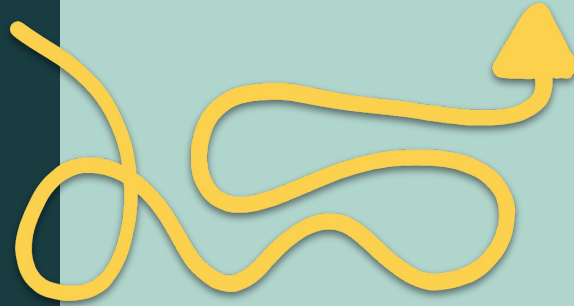
Positive Dynamic Tension Mindset

Mutual respect
Shared goals
Disagreements are not taken personally
Commitment to collaboration
Network works to uplift multiple voices and perspectives
Innovative, creative solutions can emerge

Network engagement varies...



and is nonlinear!

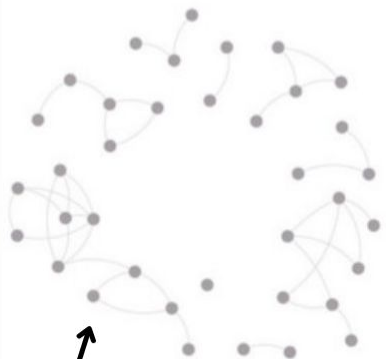


(And that's normal!)

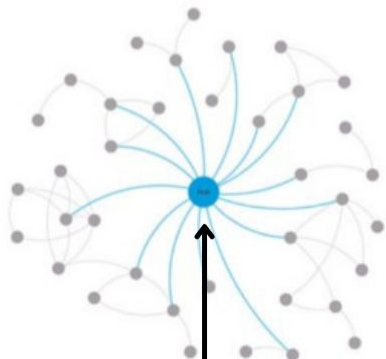
Intro to Network Visualization

Network Evolution & Terminology

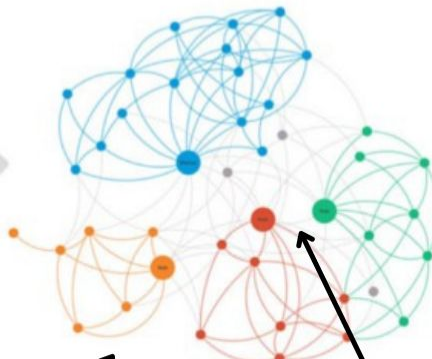
1. Scattered fragments



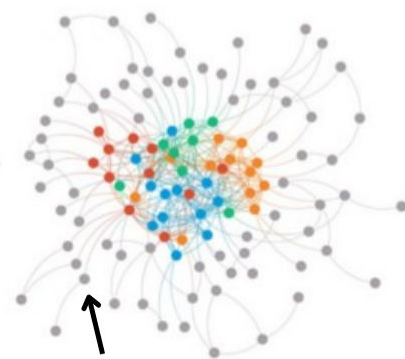
2. Hub and spoke



3. Multi-hub



4. Core/periphery



 **Nodes** (People)

 **Links/Ties**
(Connections,
Weak &
Strong)

Hub
(Highly
Connected
Nodes)

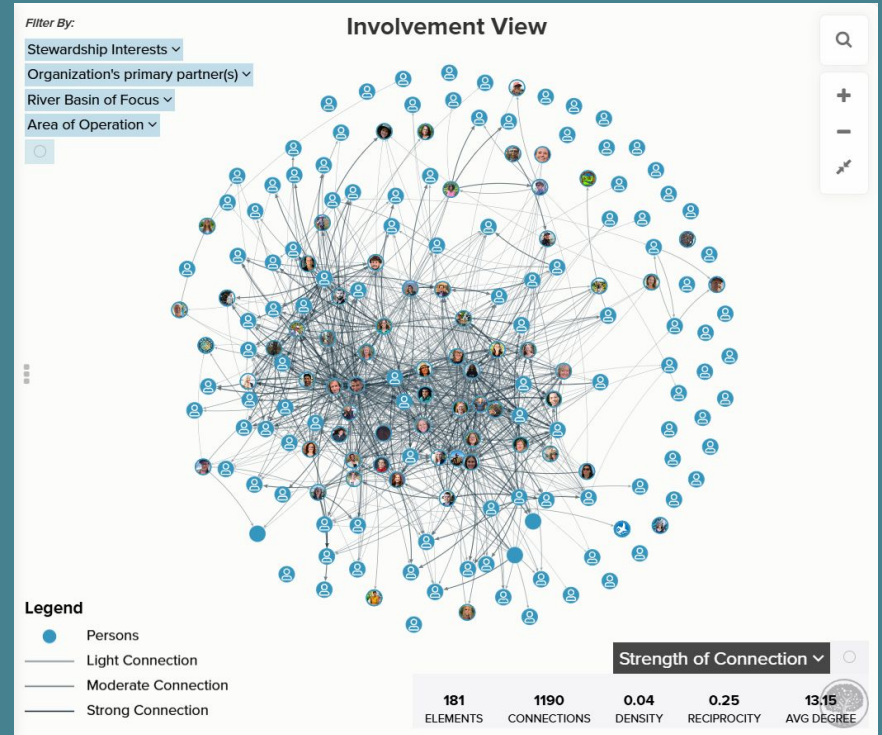
Clusters

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

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

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



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?

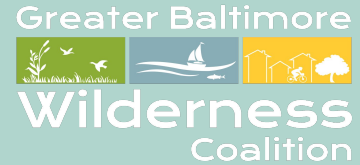
- Stewardship Interests: Conservation and/or Restoration
- River basin of focus
- Area of operation
- Organization's primary partner(s)





Food for thought...

Are you a part of a network?



Food for thought...

- Does your network embody any of the network mindset characteristics we discussed?
- Where has your network helped increase impact?
- How have networks helped your organization overcome a challenge or revealed an opportunity?
- Would your network benefit from a map of connections?



Learn More

Chesapeake Steward Map 101 sessions are held on the second Monday of each month!

- July 13, 12:00–1:00pm
- August 10, 12:00–1:00pm

Contact:

- Meredith Lemke,
lemkem@chesapeake.org

Thank you!

