

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EXTENSION

Networks: Connecting the Dots

Center for Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Tom Bartholomay, EFANS Evaluation and Research Specialist
Extension Center for Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
612-626-2162 | barth020@umn.edu
extension.umn.edu

EFANS Work

- Educational Programs
- Research
- Publications

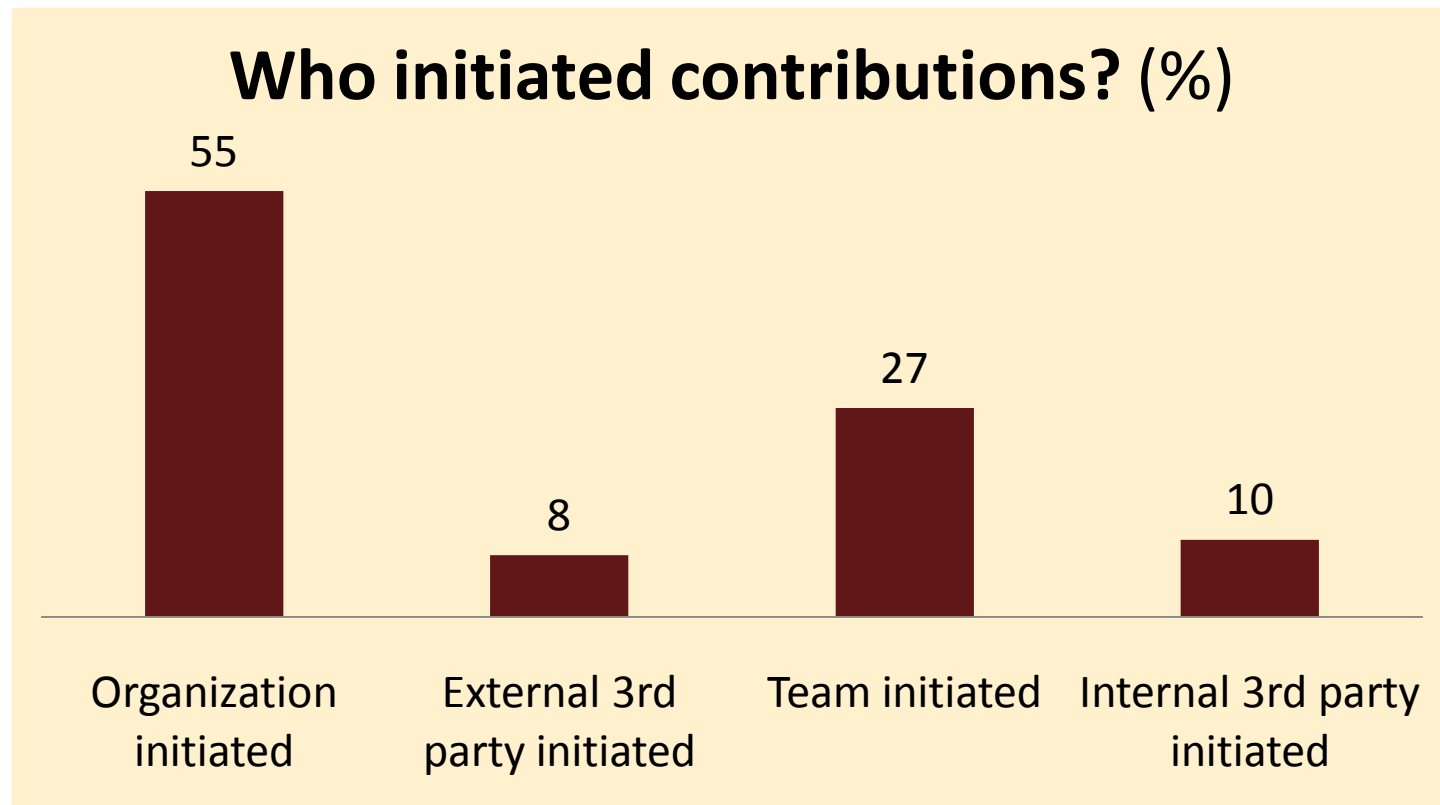
EFANS Work

Organization Support

- Improve the functionality of organizations
- Enlarge the capacity of organizations
 - Partnerships
 - Added information/consulting/training/programming
- Generate feedback for EFANS learning and relevancy

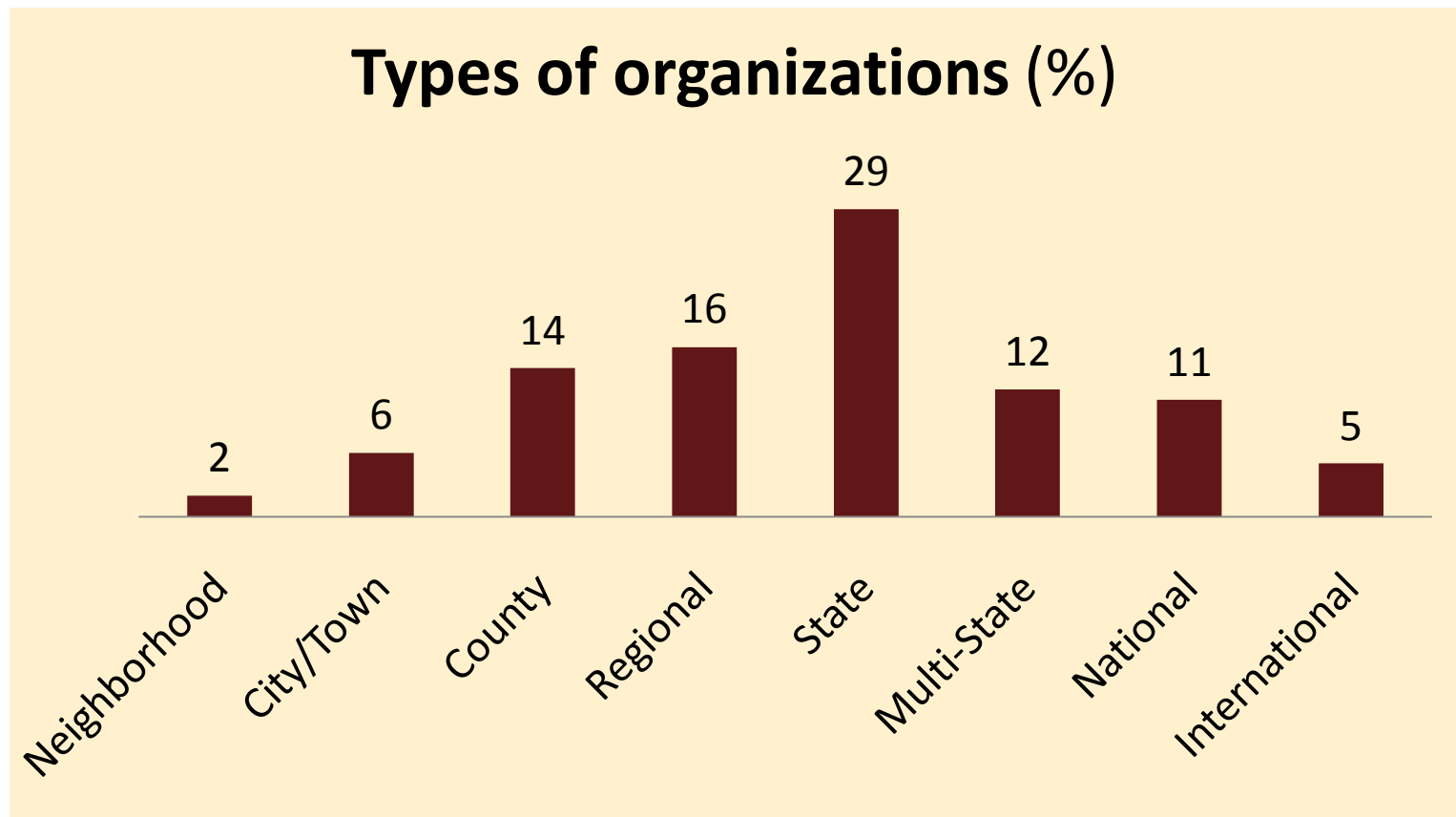
EFANS Organization Networks

- 96% of all EFANS employees participated in this study (n=218)
- 76% contributed 8 hours or more to at least one organization external to the U of M (n=165)
- 1313 contributions were made to 934 different organizations or departments



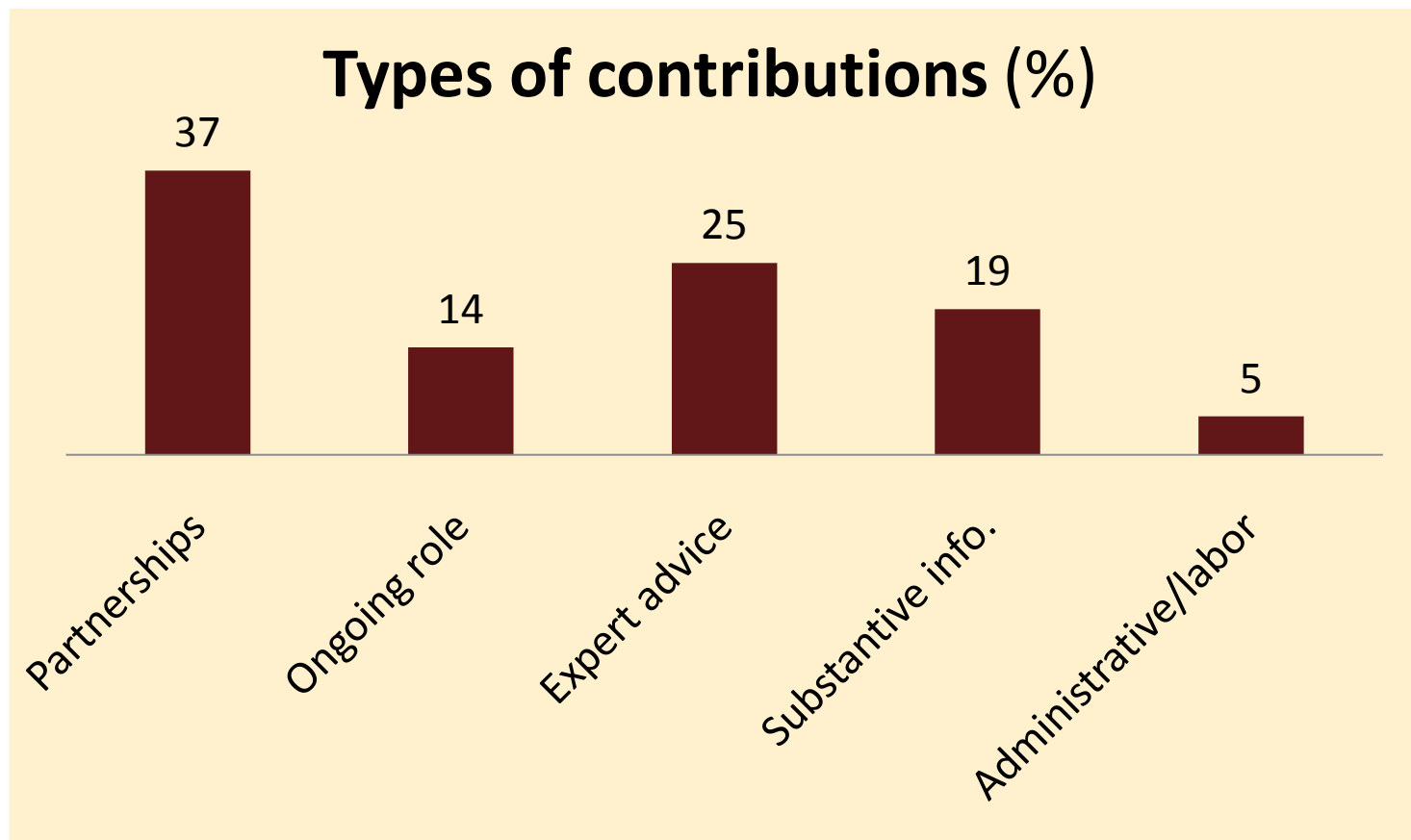
EFANS Organization Networks

- 96% of all EFANS employees participated in this study (n=218)
- 76% contributed 8 hours or more to at least one organization external to the U of M (n=165)
- 1313 contributions were made to 934 different organizations or departments



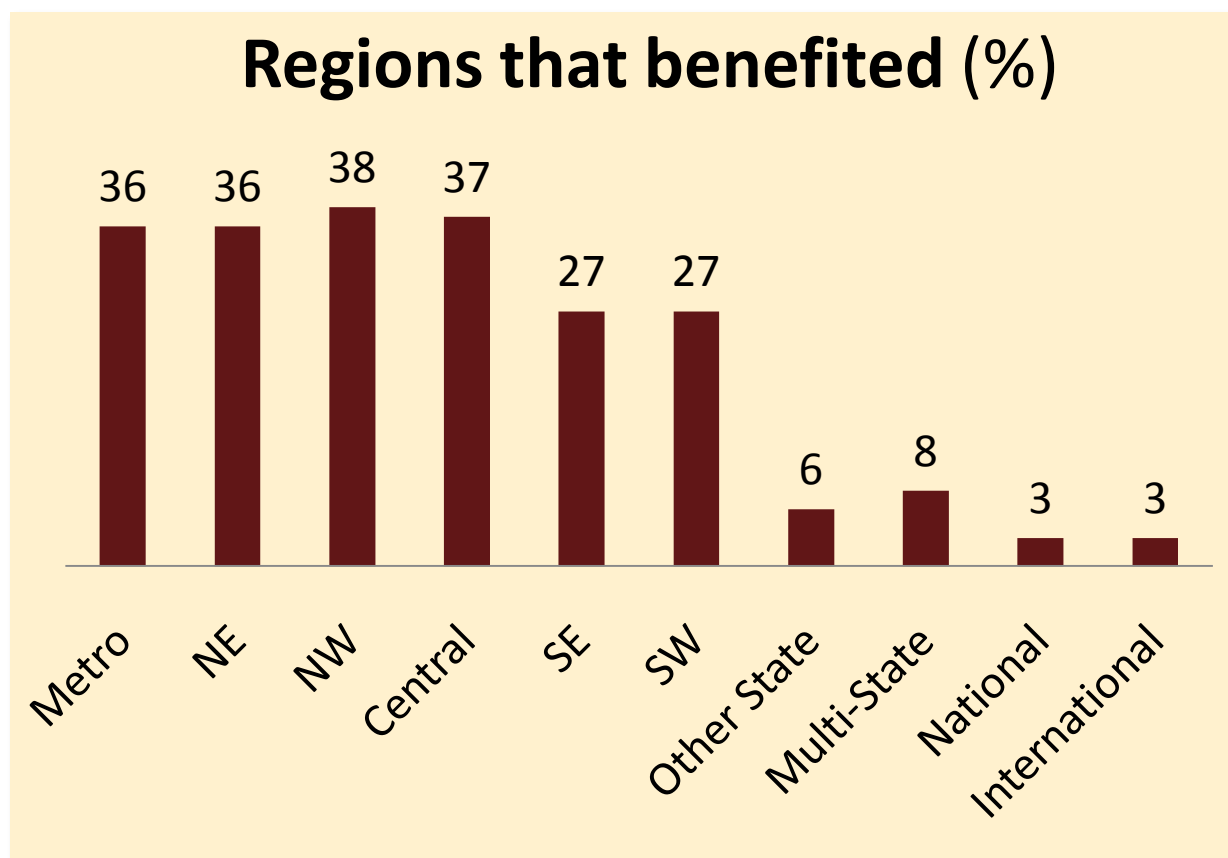
EFANS Organization Networks

- 96% of all EFANS employees participated in this study (n=218)
- 76% contributed 8 hours or more to at least one organization external to the U of M (n=165)
- 1313 contributions were made to 934 different organizations or departments



EFANS Organization Networks

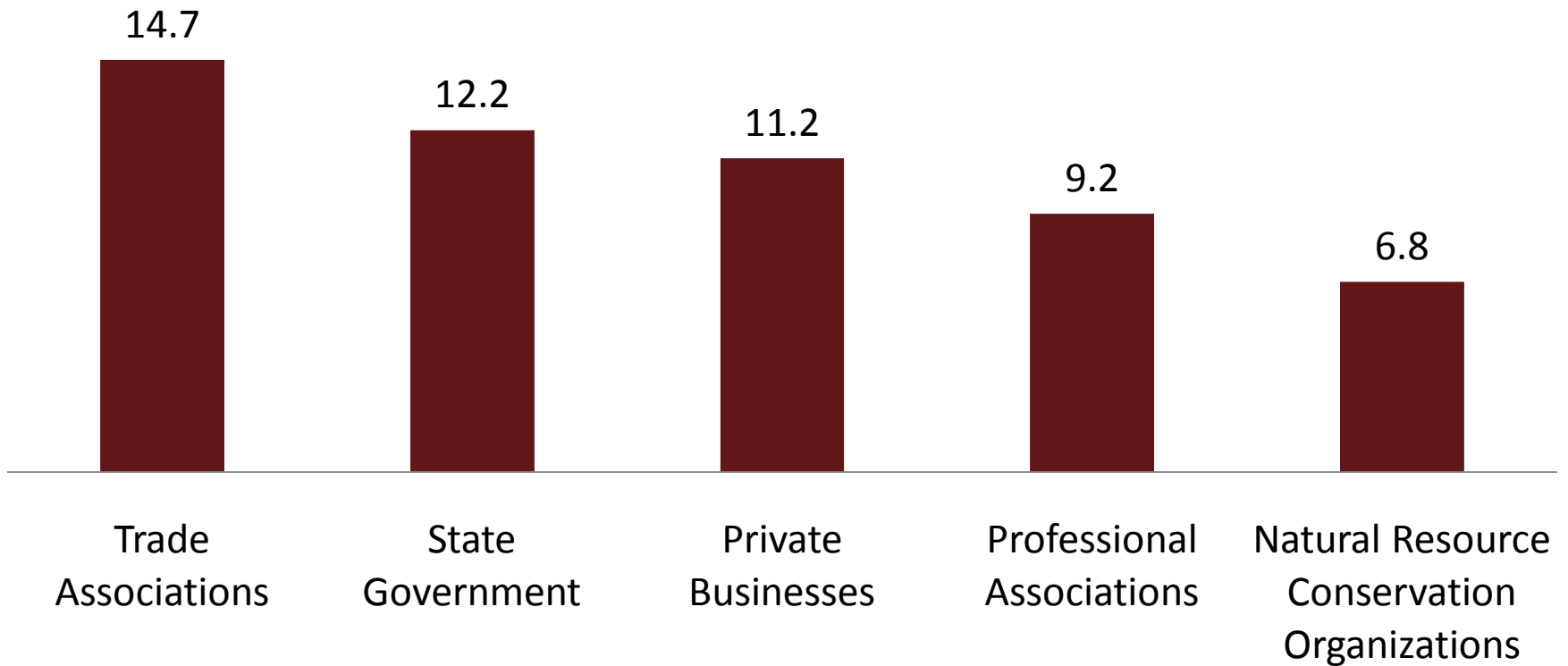
- 96% of all EFANS employees participated in this study (n=218)
- 76% contributed 8 hours or more to at least one organization external to the U of M (n=165)
- 1313 contributions were made to 934 different organizations or departments




International
EFANS generates
81% of all Extension

National
EFANS generates
49% of all Extension

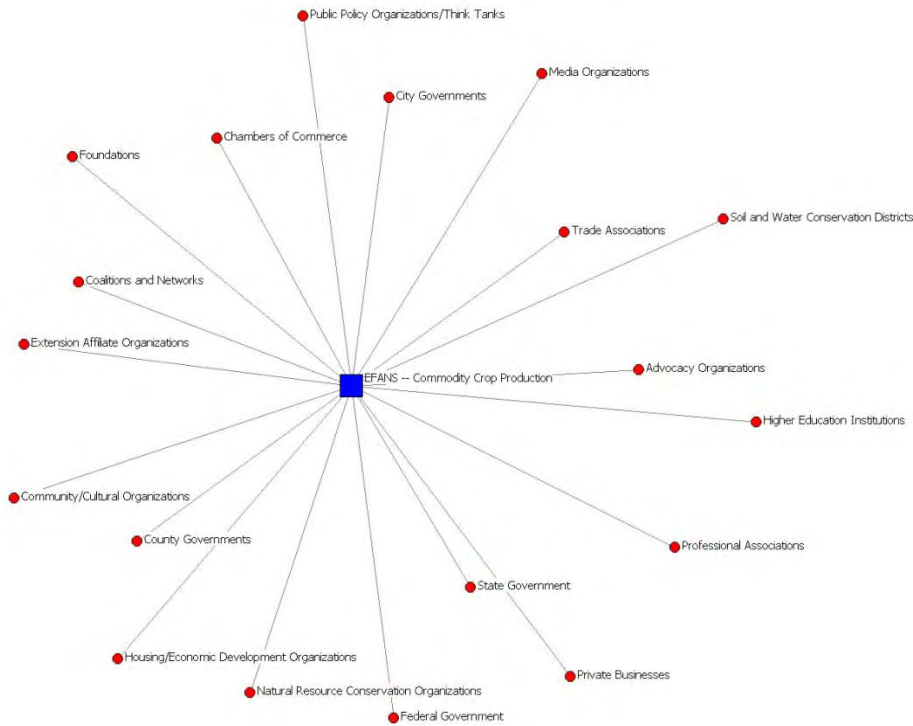
**Percentage of EFANS contributions to organization categories:
Top 5 of 32 (n=1313 contributions in all)**



EFANS Program Teams
serve a lot of the same
types of organizations



Commodity Crop Production Outreach



179 Org. Contributions (8 hrs. +)
19 Organization categories

Type of Service

29% Partnerships
08% Ongoing role
27% Expert advice
27% Substantive information

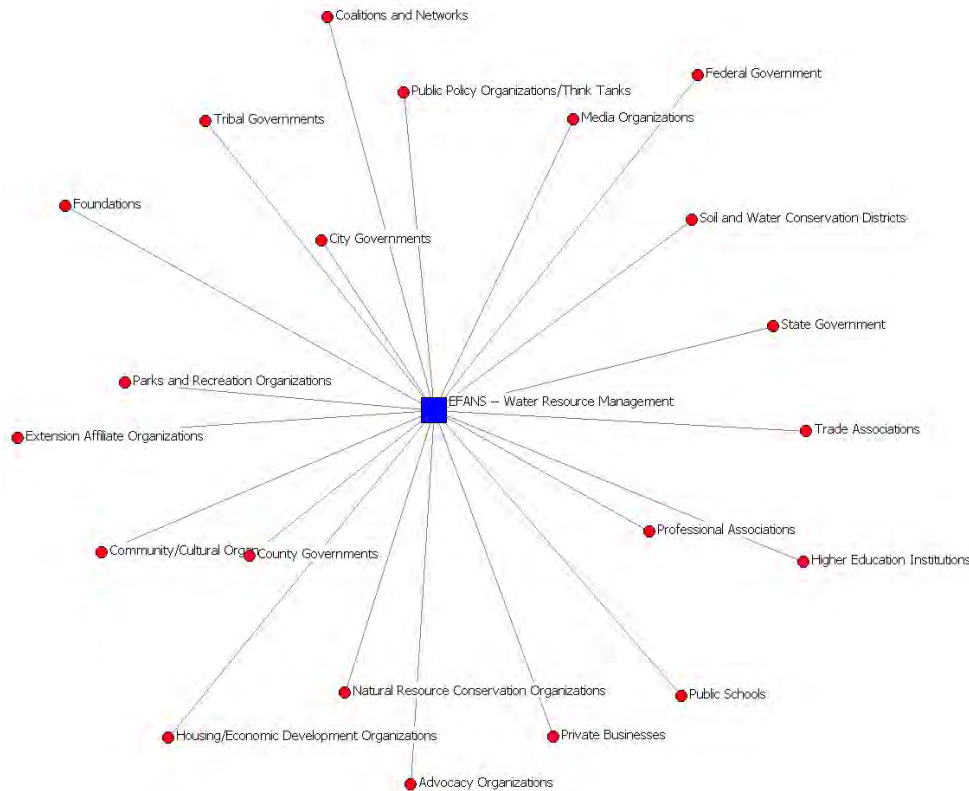
Who initiated service?

56% Organization initiated
23% Team initiated

Perceived importance

46% Very important
40% Moderately important

Water Resource Mgt. Outreach



170 Org. Contributions (8 hrs. +)
21 Organization categories

Type of Service

45% Partnerships
14% Ongoing role
31% Expert advice
08% Substantive information

Who initiated service?

24% Organization initiated
55% Team initiated

Perceived importance

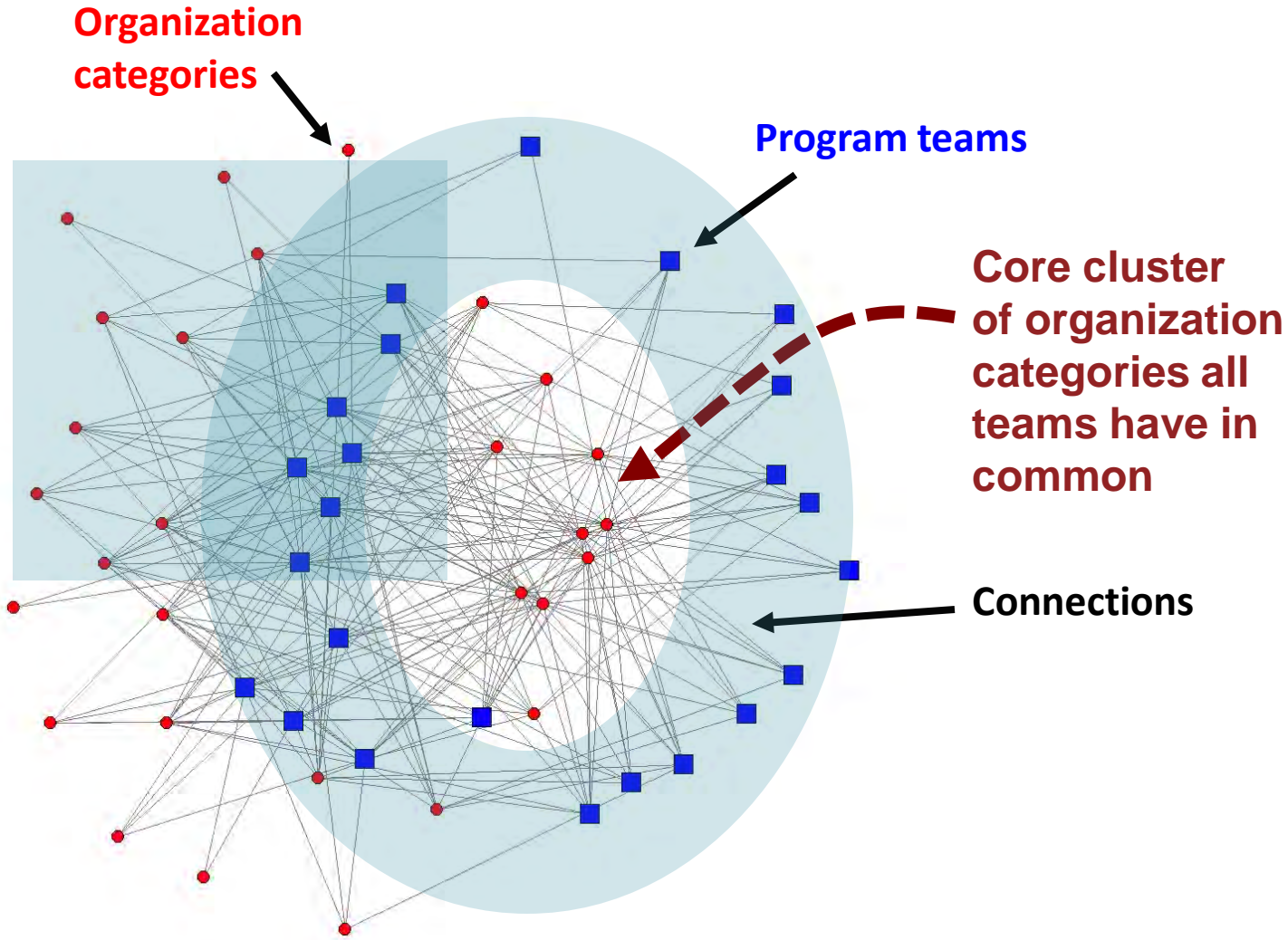
50% Very important
36% Moderately important

Two program teams contributing to many of the same organization categories

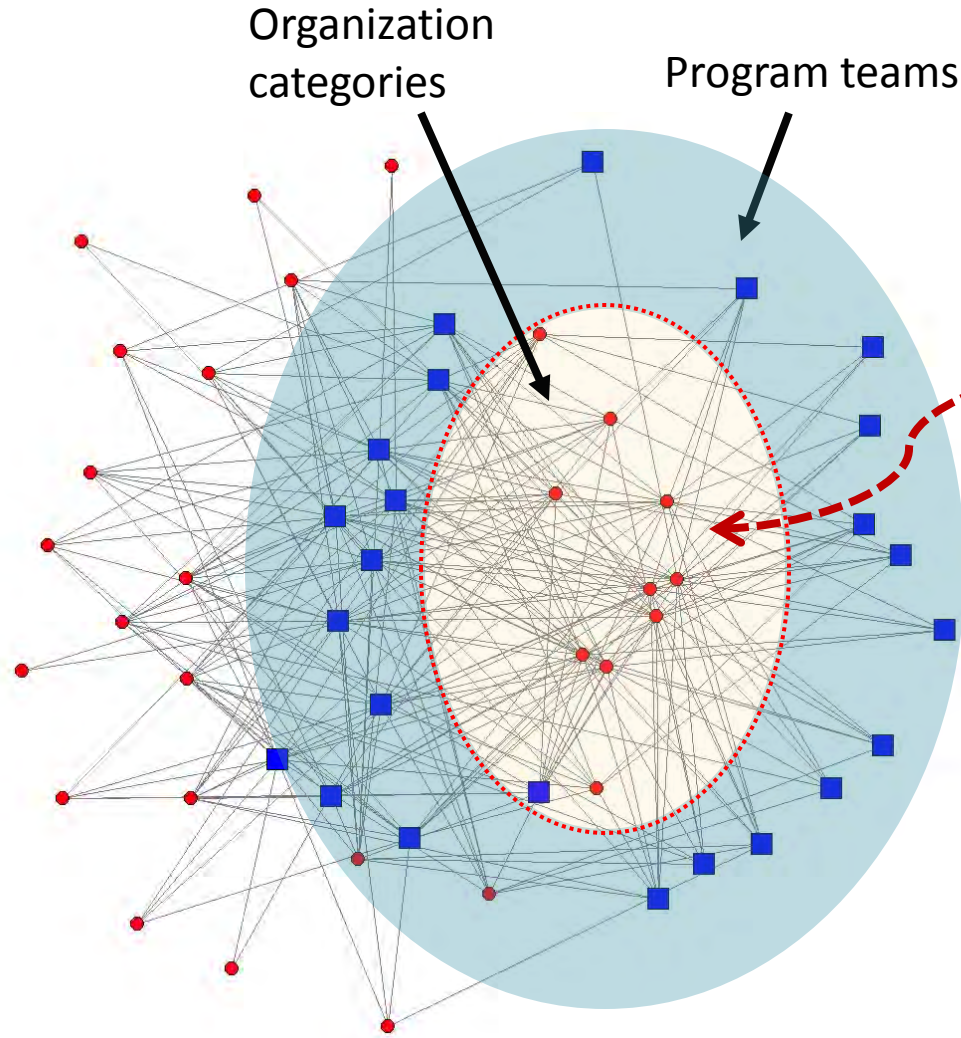


18 Organization categories in common

EFANS Teams and Organization Categories

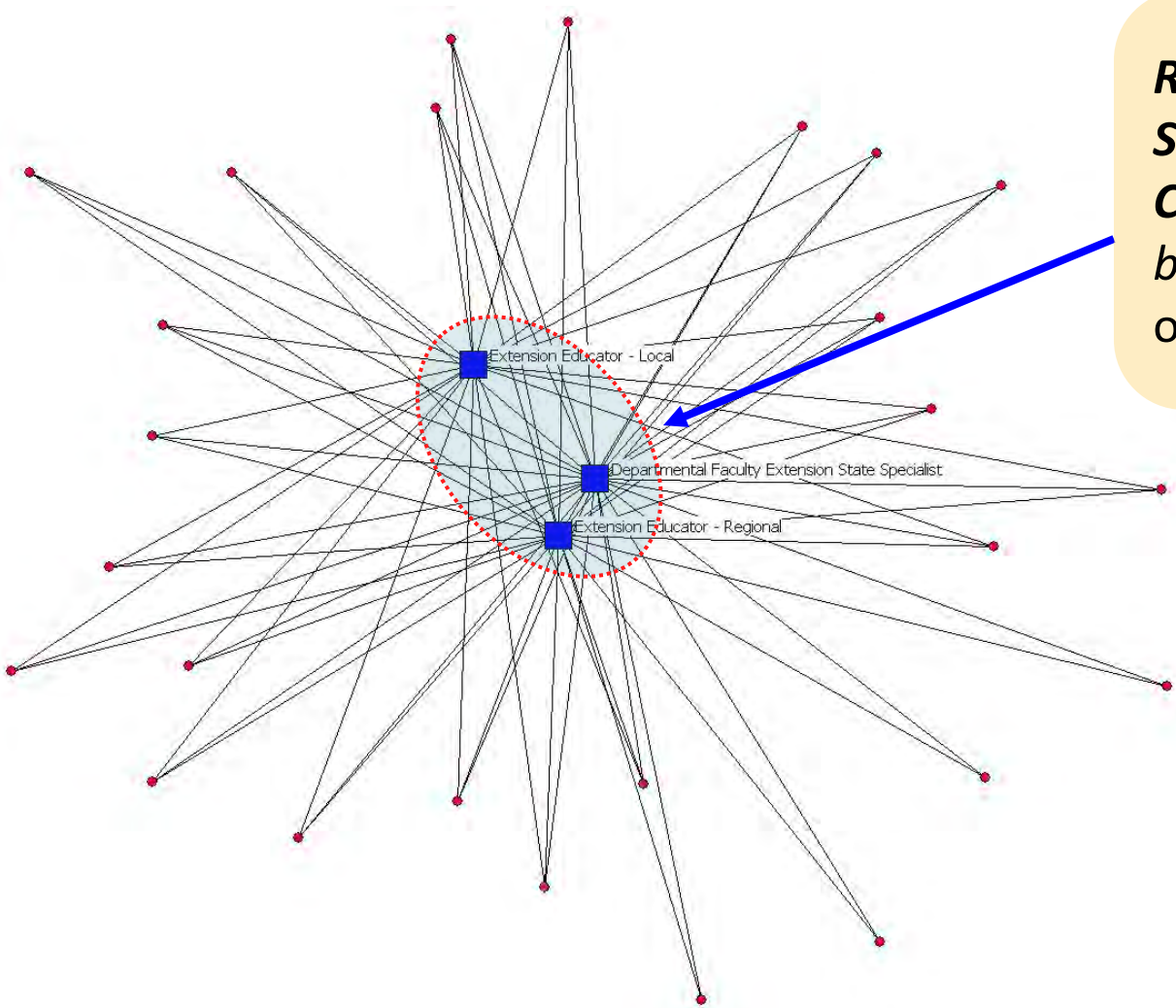


EFANS Teams and Organization Categories



- Media Organizations
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Natural Res. Conservation Orgs.
- Federal Government
- Trade Associations
- State Government
- Higher Education Institutions
- Professional Associations
- Private Businesses
- Public Schools


EFANS Educator Categories & Org. Categories



Regional Educators, State Specialists, and County-based Educators basically serve the same organization categories

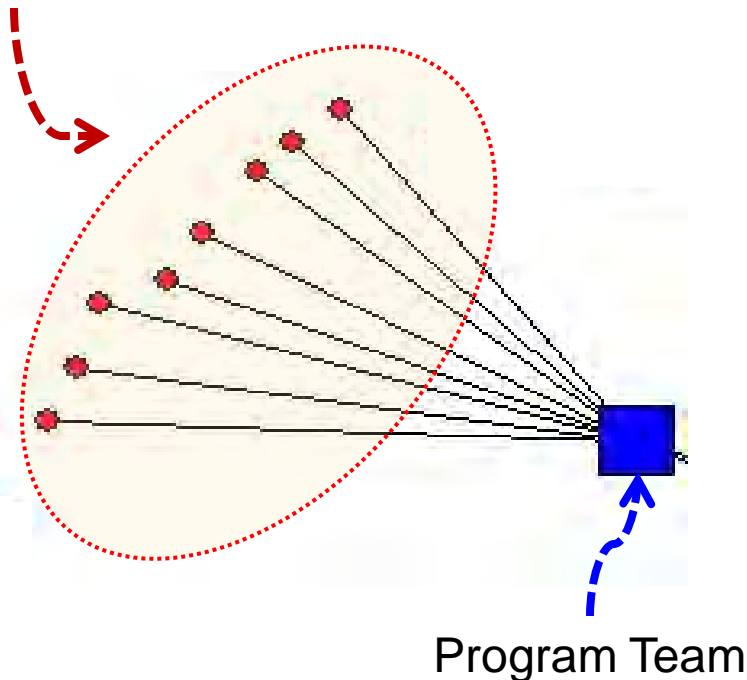
EFANS Networks:

Teams have a lot in common, but to what degree does their actual work overlap?



Outreach to Specific Organizations

A program team network



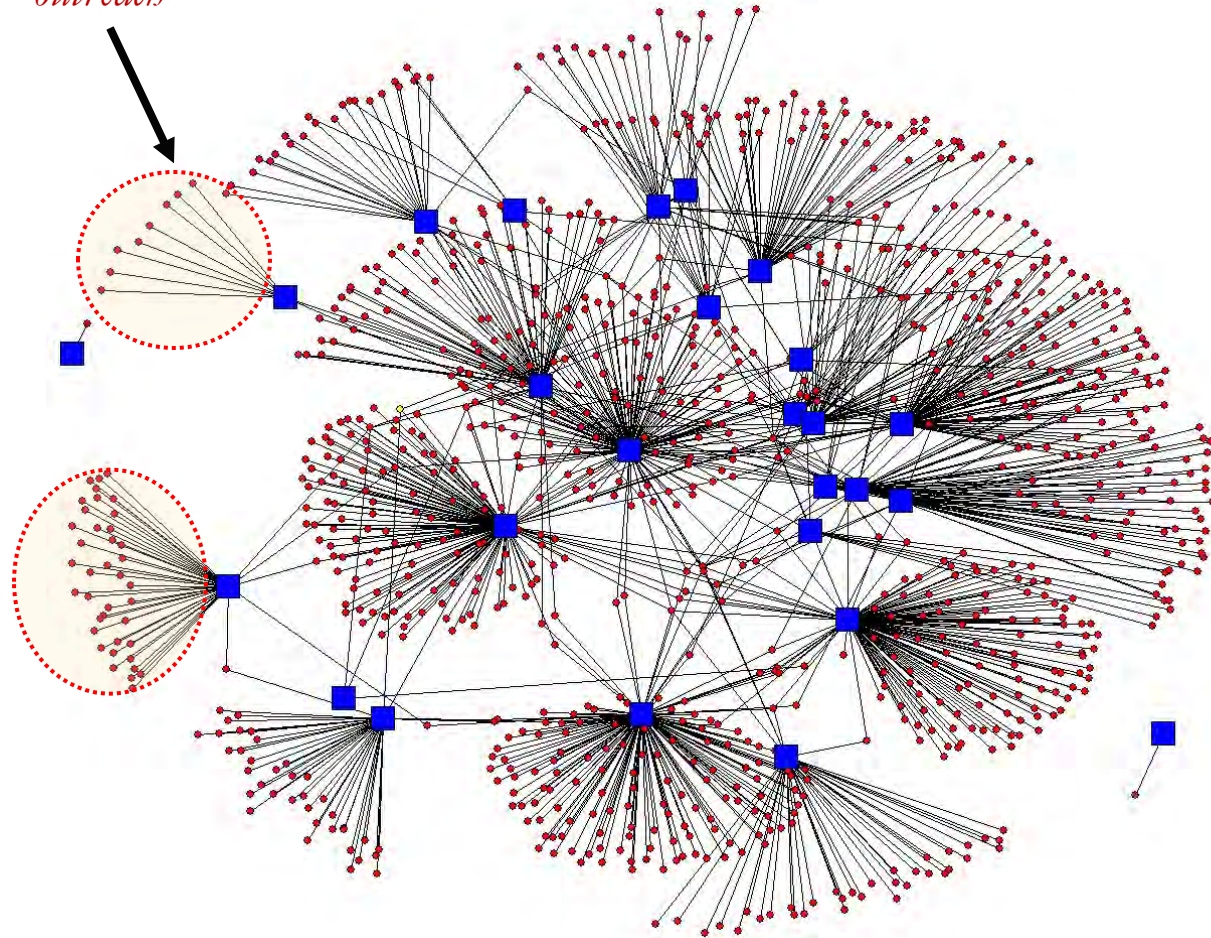
- Traditional University Outreach Network
- Program-centric network
- Network boundaries defined by program's boundaries of specialized content
- Builds network independent of other program teams

Like a business, this program delivers its content and related activities to its market – i.e., organizations they pursue or organizations that pursue them.

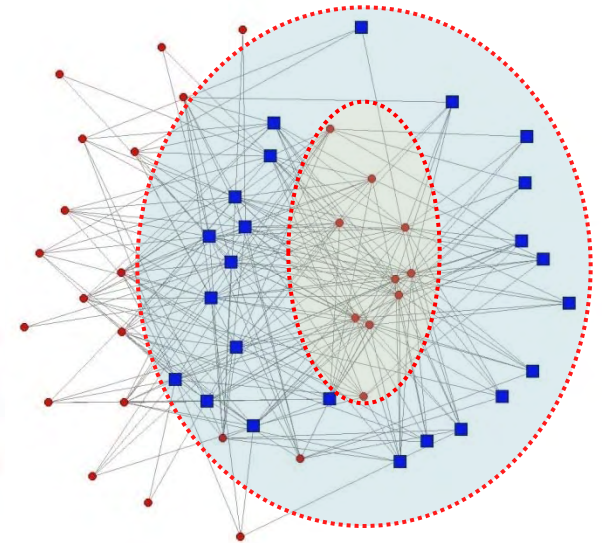
Outreach to Specific Organizations

*Evidence of
team-centric
outreach*

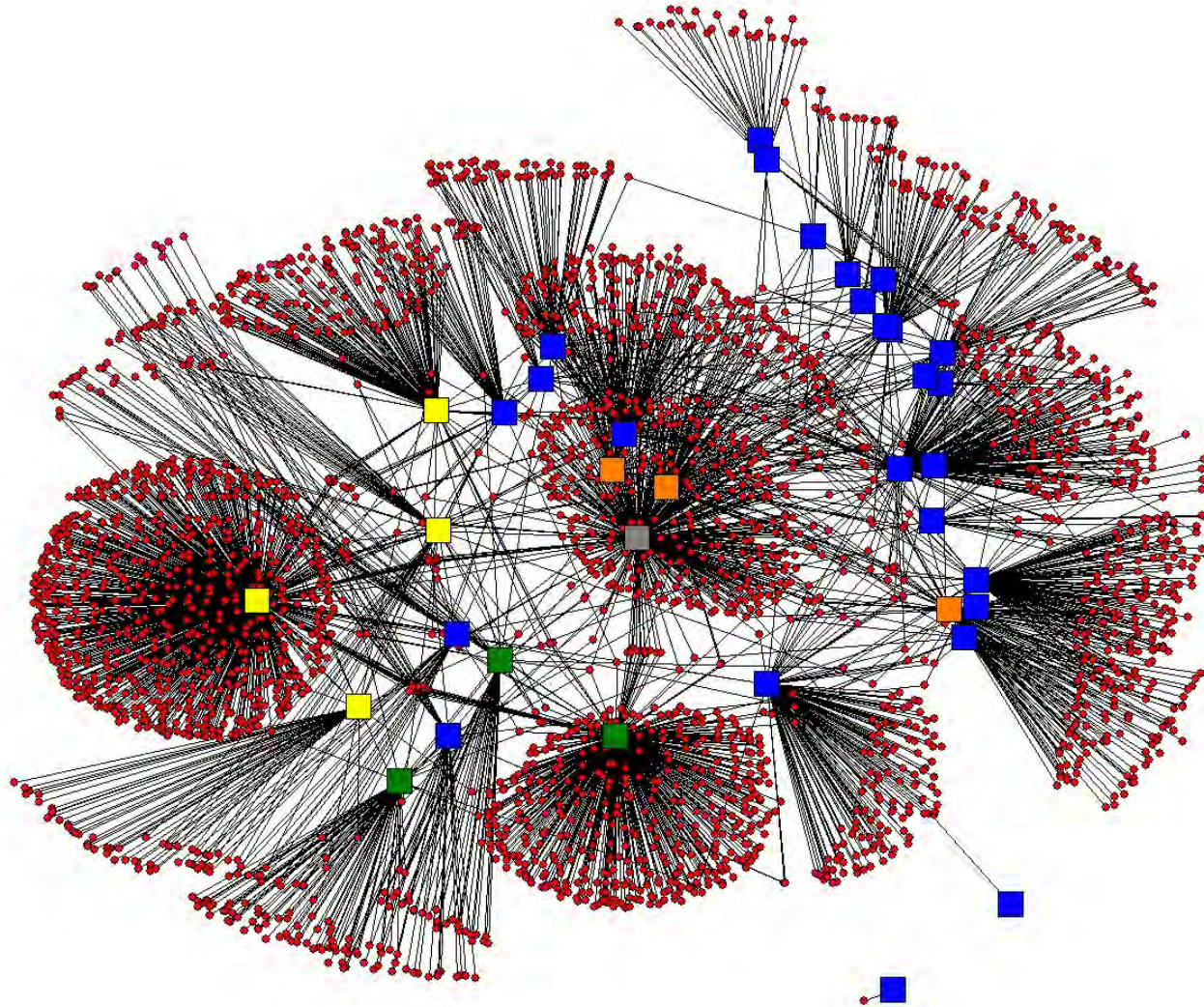
**EFANS:
Serving Different networks**



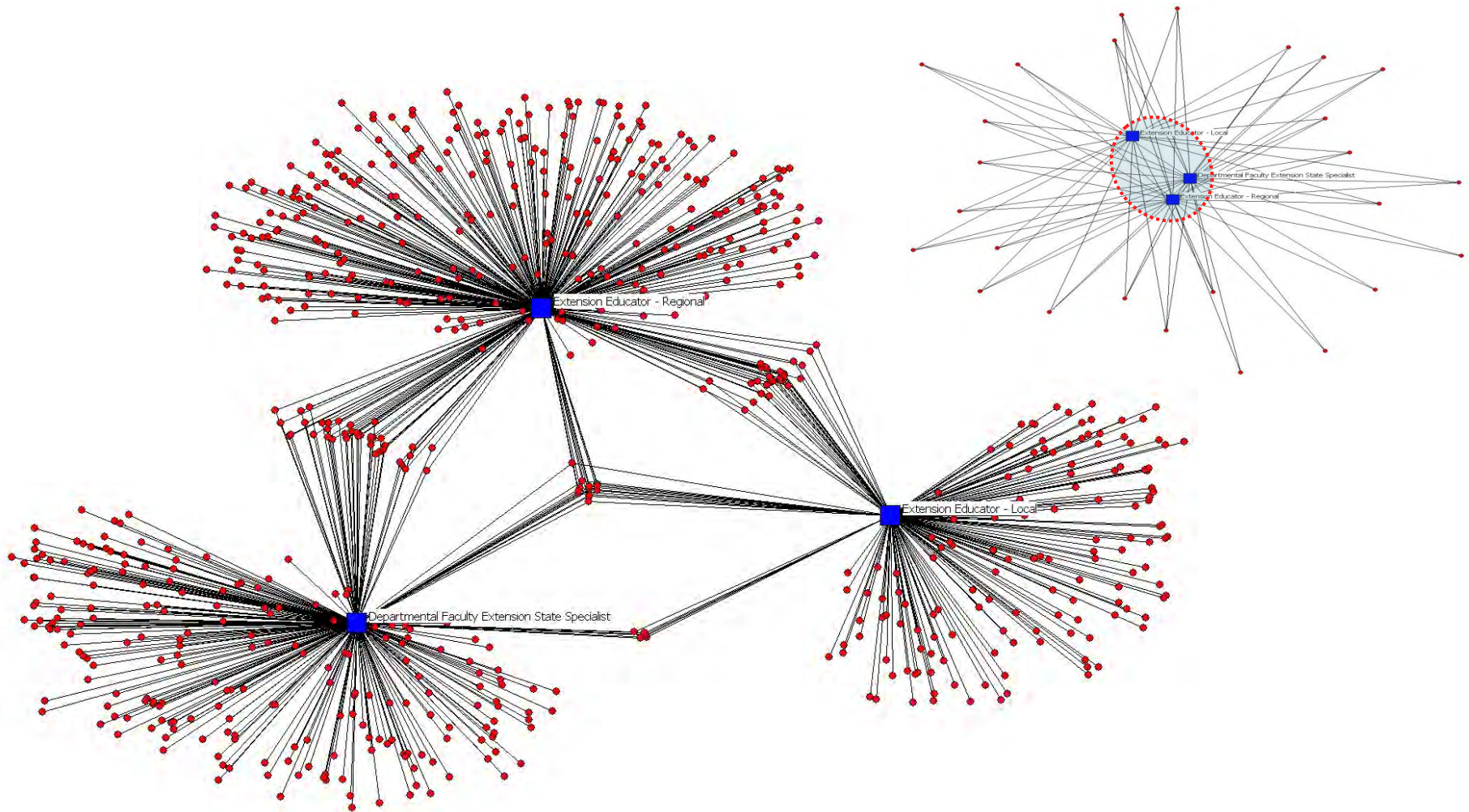
**EFANS:
Serving Same Categories**



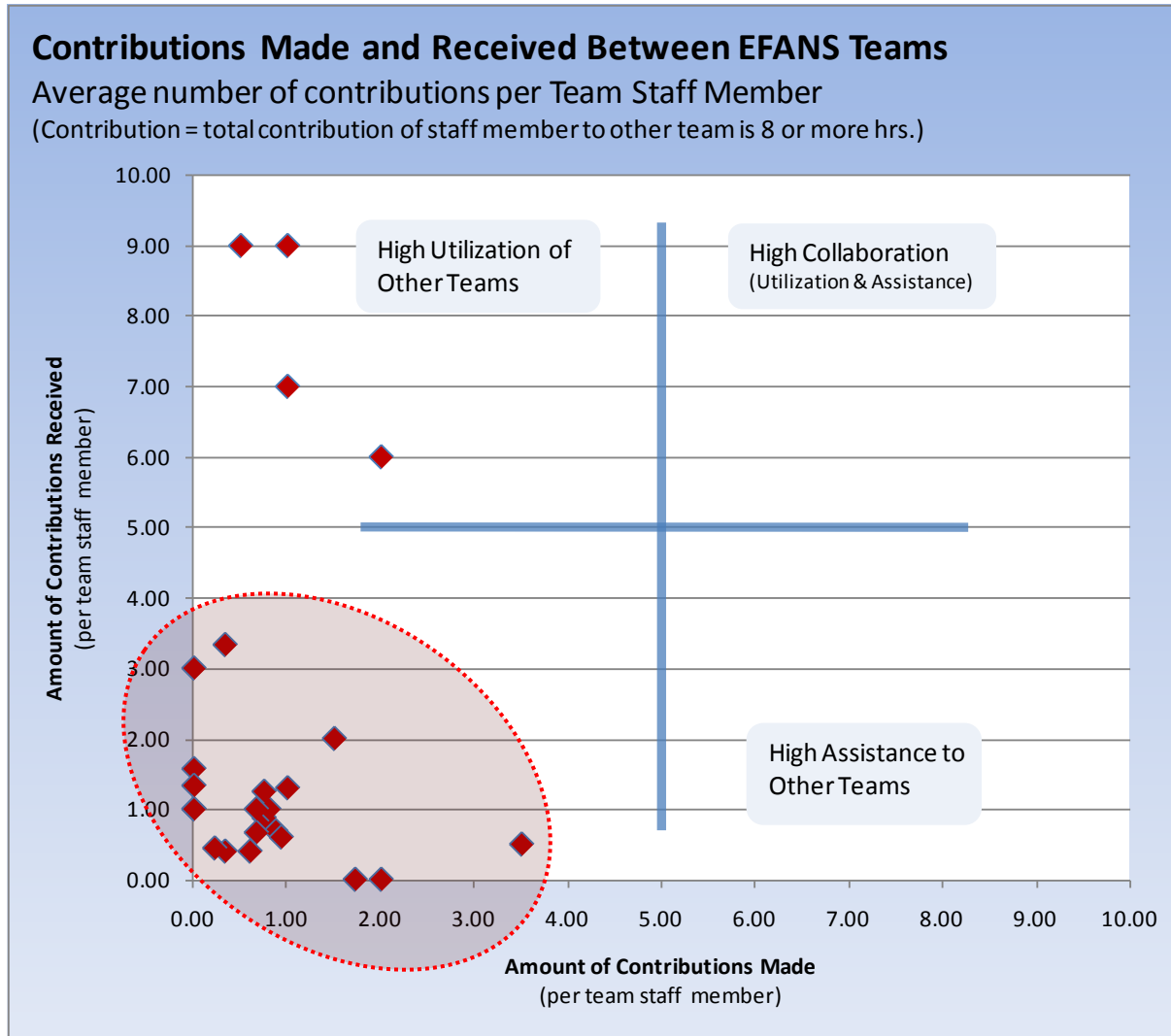
Extension-wide Outreach to Specific Organizations



Staff Categories: Outreach to Specific Organizations



Cross-program contributions: Survey found that contributions between program teams were low



EFANS: Network Findings

Finding 1: Program teams serve many of the same organization categories.

Finding 2: Program teams develop their own networks within these categories.

Finding 3: There is little effort sharing between program teams.

Networks are an essential part of
our work and programming

A decorative graphic consisting of a solid yellow horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide. Below this bar, on the right side, there are three parallel white horizontal lines of varying lengths, creating a stepped, modern look.

Why networks are important

- **Networks largely determine what we think.** Most of what people learn comes socially through their networks with colleagues, both internally and externally.
- **Networks largely determine our opportunities to affect others.** As mentioned above, what people learn largely comes from others. Building relationships with key networks can give you or your program more influence.
- **Research has found that individuals and organizations that bridge two or more networks perform better than those involved in one network.** They have more “room” to think broadly, they are receptacles for broader sources of information, and they have broader opportunities for influence.
- **Networks are a kind of capital – “social capital.” Social capital can be as valuable as financial capital.** Gains in information, collaboration opportunities, and increased influence can improve strategy, coordination, efficiency, and effectiveness. EFANS has a wealth of untapped connections that can be turned into social capital and leveraged in our programming.
- **Involvement in more networks means more security.** Broader connections allows for more stability when change occurs.

EFANS teams have a lot of available network capital that can be leveraged to improve the breadth and effectiveness of their work

But how can we leverage this capital?

Broader intentions lead to broader networks.

Support for Broadening Your Intentions

Growing awareness

- Problems exist within a system of factors.
- Change involves multiple solutions, multiple players.
- Education services intended to produce behavior change and/or impact need to be **approached as interventions**, including a focus on people within their context (system of factors)

Growing demands and opportunities

- Outcome and impact demands by stakeholders
- Multi-disciplinary grant opportunities
- Integrated grant opportunities

Broadening Your Intentions

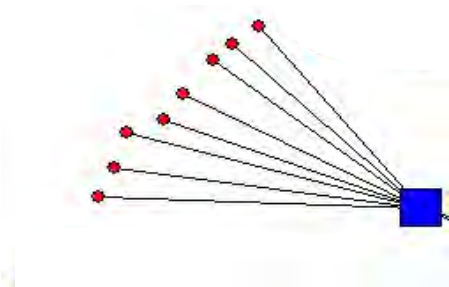
Inputs/Outputs Intentions

- Few factors
- Limited goal
- Narrowed responsibility
- Small system of players



Outcome/Impact Intentions

- Many levels of factors
- Multiple goals
- Broader responsibility
- Large system of players



Broadening Your Networks

Inputs/Outputs Networks

- Research networks
- Content development networks
- Delivery networks
- Direct participant networks



Outcome/Impact Networks

(Contextual Factor Networks)

- Population-based networks
- Factors-based networks
(*Economic, Social, Ideological, Political, Technological, etc.*)

Two levels of network participants

Informants (needed for learning)

People/organizations who have important knowledge of the audiences and/or subjects being addressed

Actors (needed to include for action)

People/organizations who have important roles in the achievement of goals

- Facilitators
- Obstructors

Broadening Your Networks

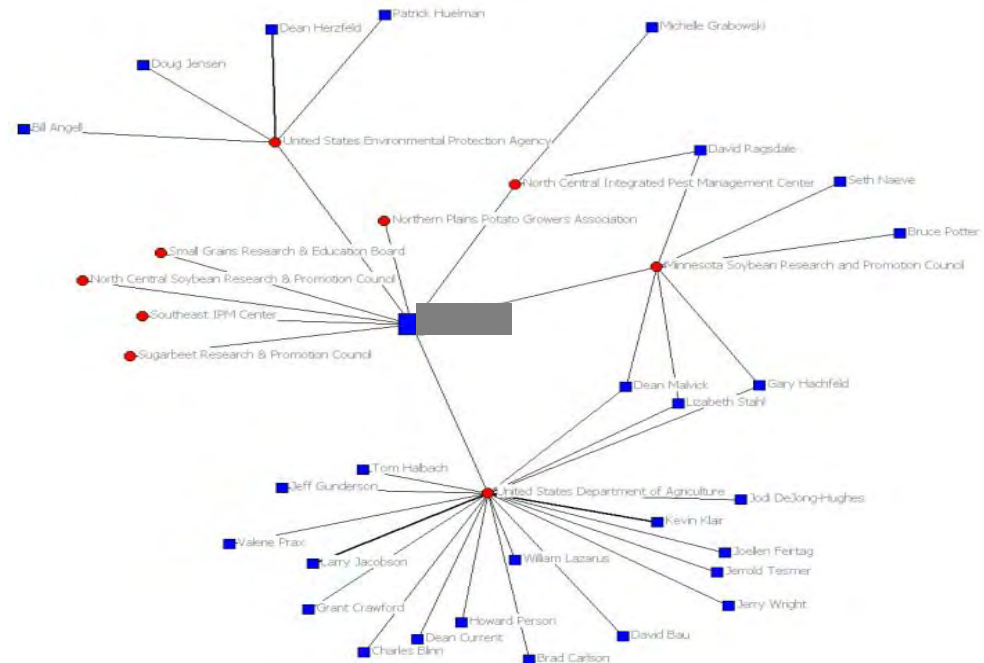
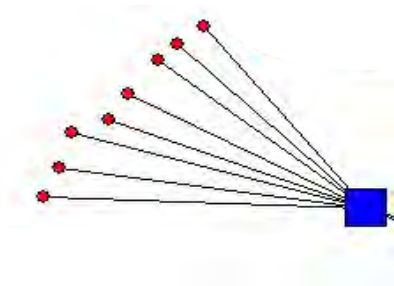
Inputs/Outputs Networks

- Research networks
- Content development networks
- Delivery networks
- Direct participant networks



Outcome/Impact Networks (Contextual Factor Networks)

- Population-based networks
- Factors-based networks




Leveraging Networks Close to Home: Three Practical Strategies

1. Identify and develop relations with staff members from other teams who serve the same organizations or categories you do (Professional Development Networks/Program Team Networks)
2. Systematically build a network for a broadened range of affect
3. Simple self-assessment of the effectiveness of your current networks

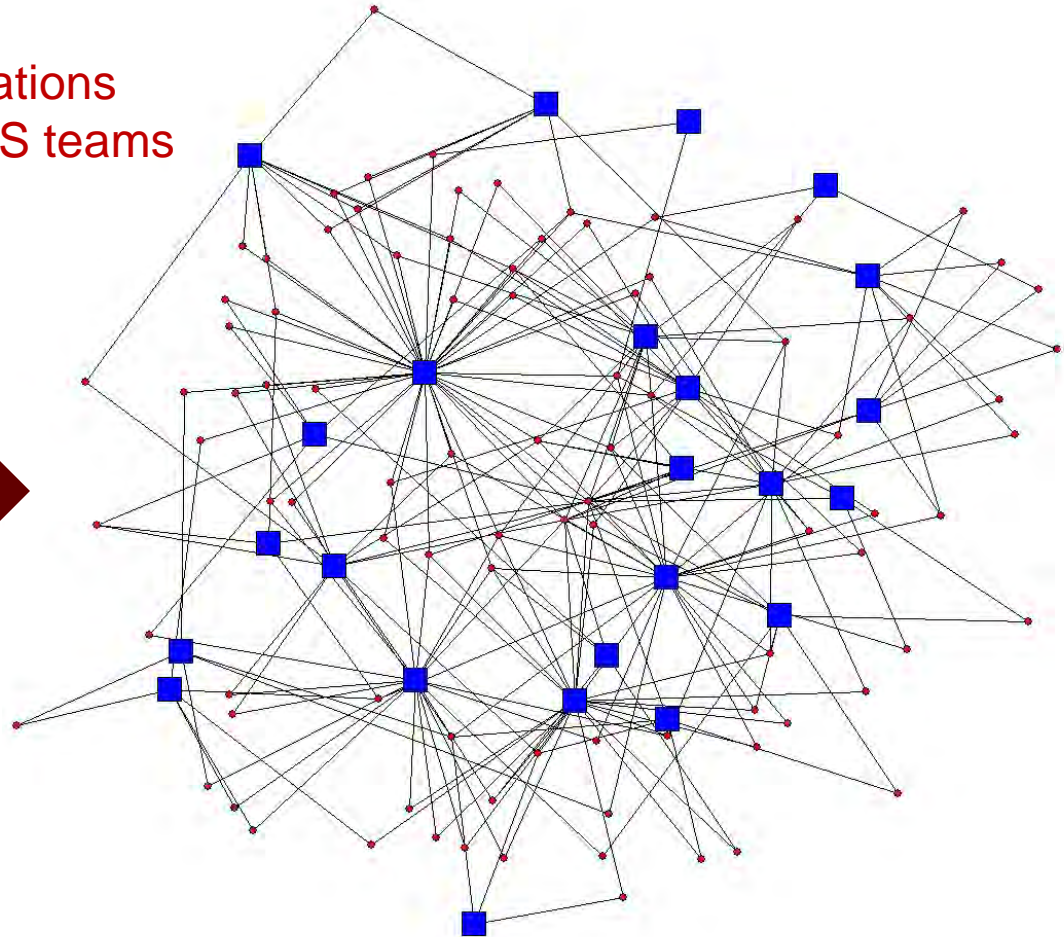
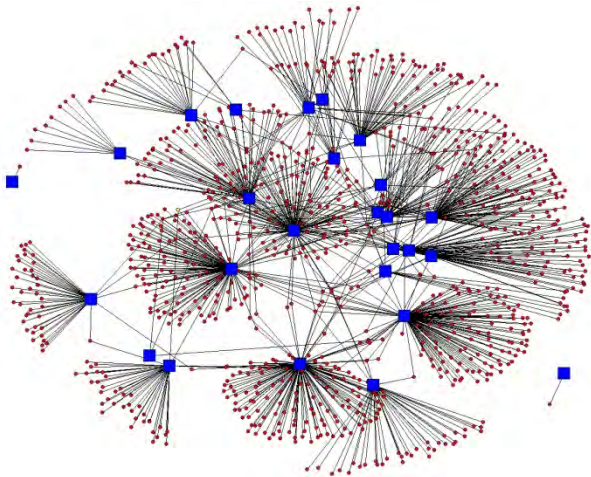
Leveraging Networks, Practical Strategies

#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common



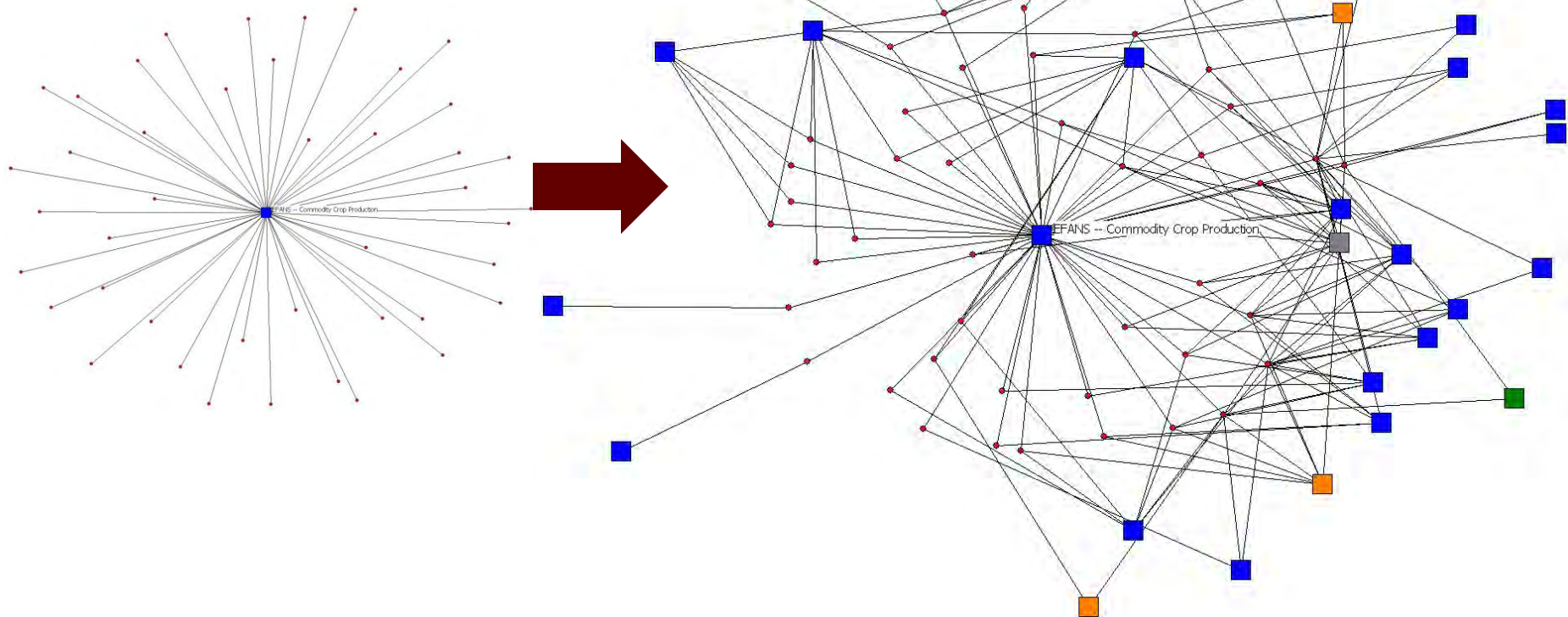
#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common

Specific organizations
shared by EFANS teams



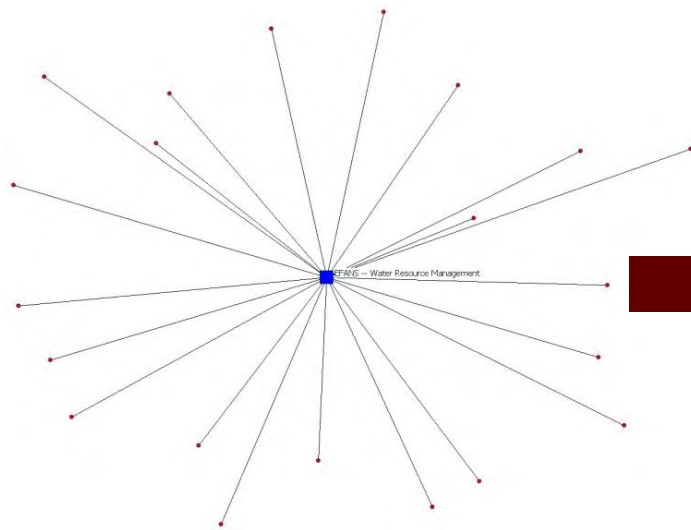
#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common

Example:
Commodity Crops

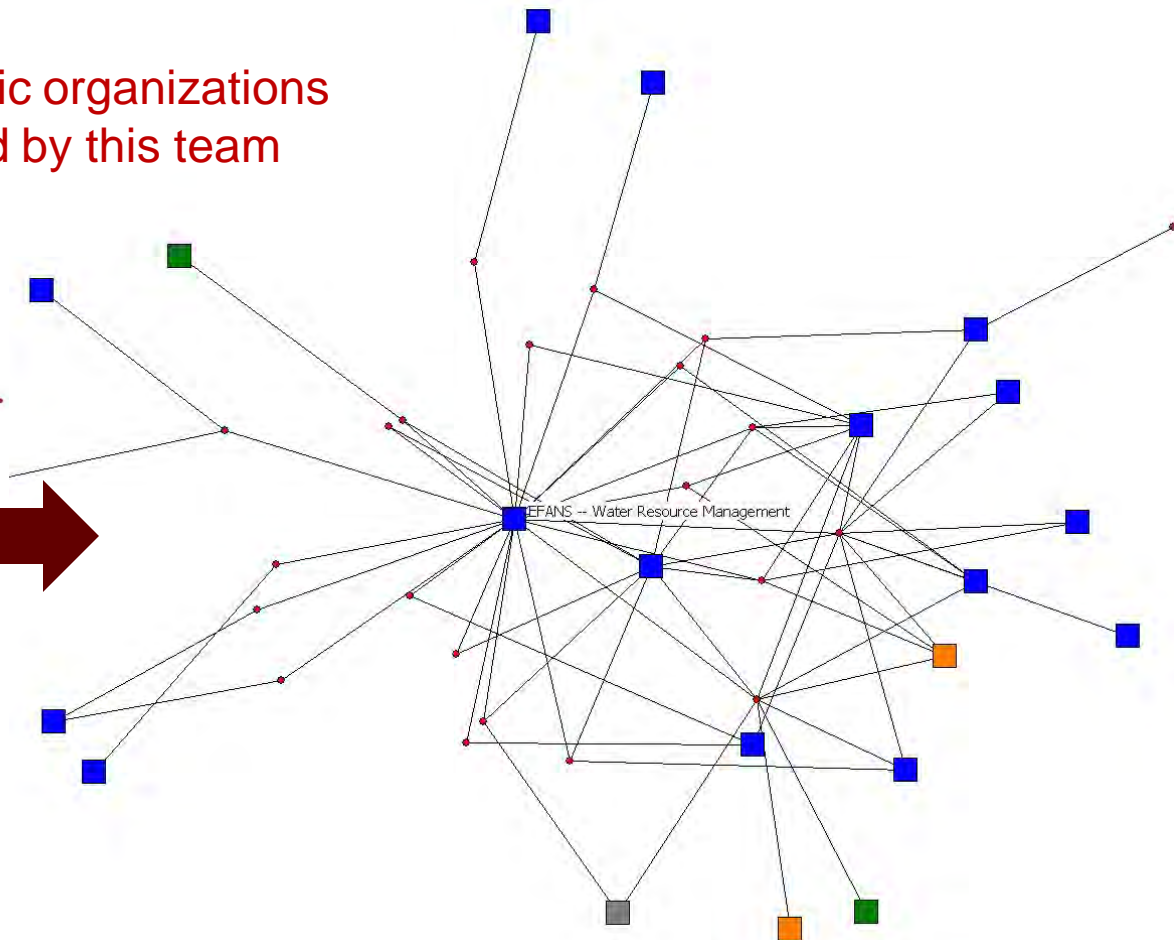


#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common

Example:
Water Res. Mgmt.

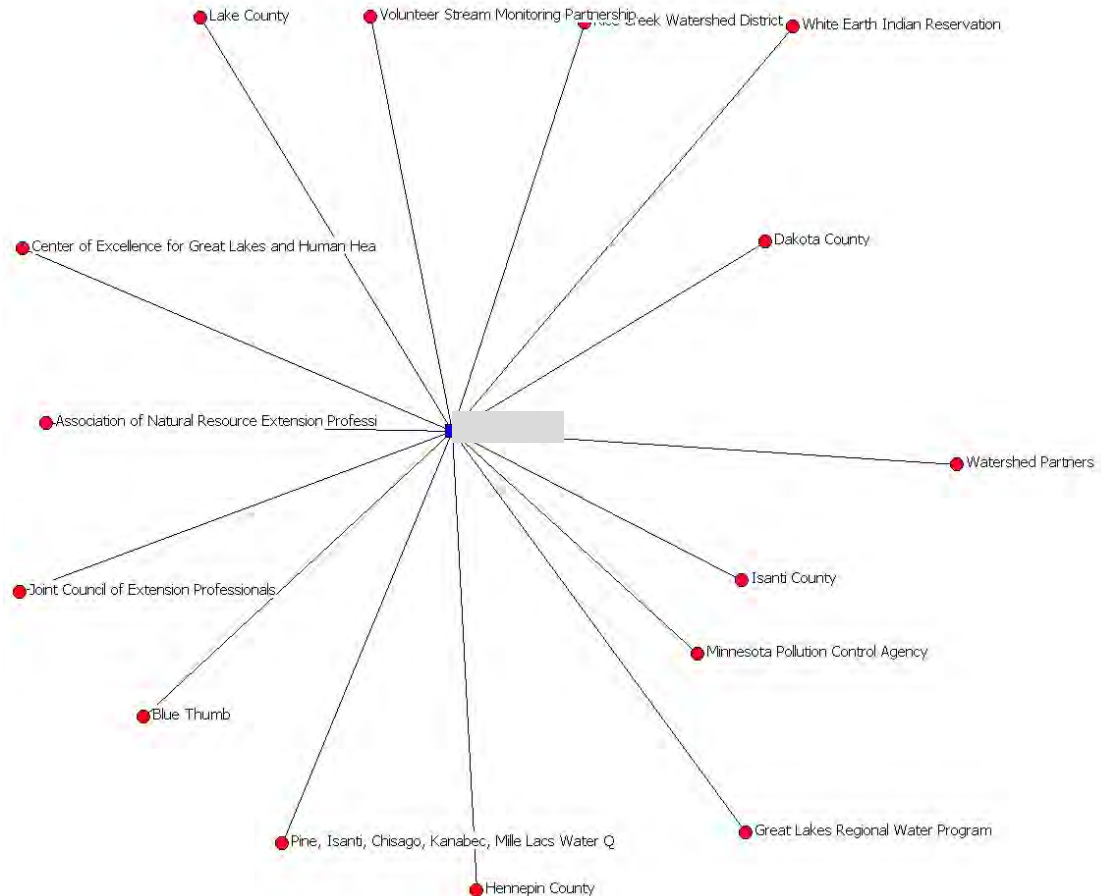


Specific organizations
shared by this team



#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common

Example:
Organization network
of EFANS staff member

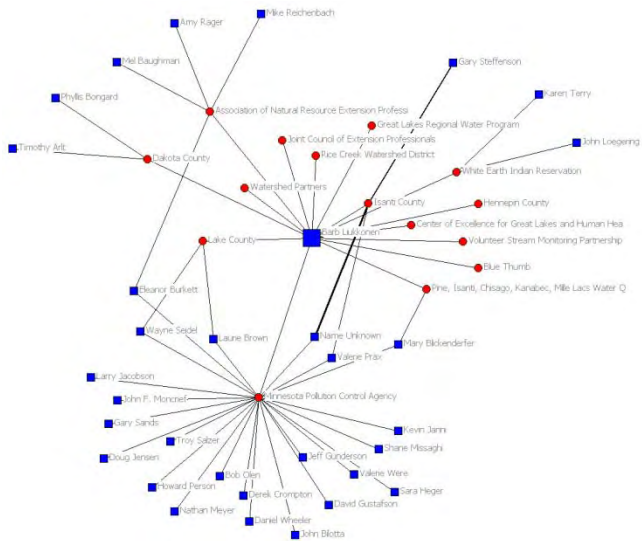


#1: Identify and develop relationships with staff and teams with which you have networks in common

Leverage Extension's "knowledge capital"

Contact people who serve the same organizations as you.

- Find out what they know about the organization.
- Find out what they know about the larger context in which the organization plays a role.
- Find out what they do with the organization and the "larger context."
- Find out how they do it.



Leveraging Networks, Practical Strategies

#2: Systematically develop networks around a broadened range of intended affect



Strategy #2: Example - map of services

Topic: Water

Audience: Agric. Professionals

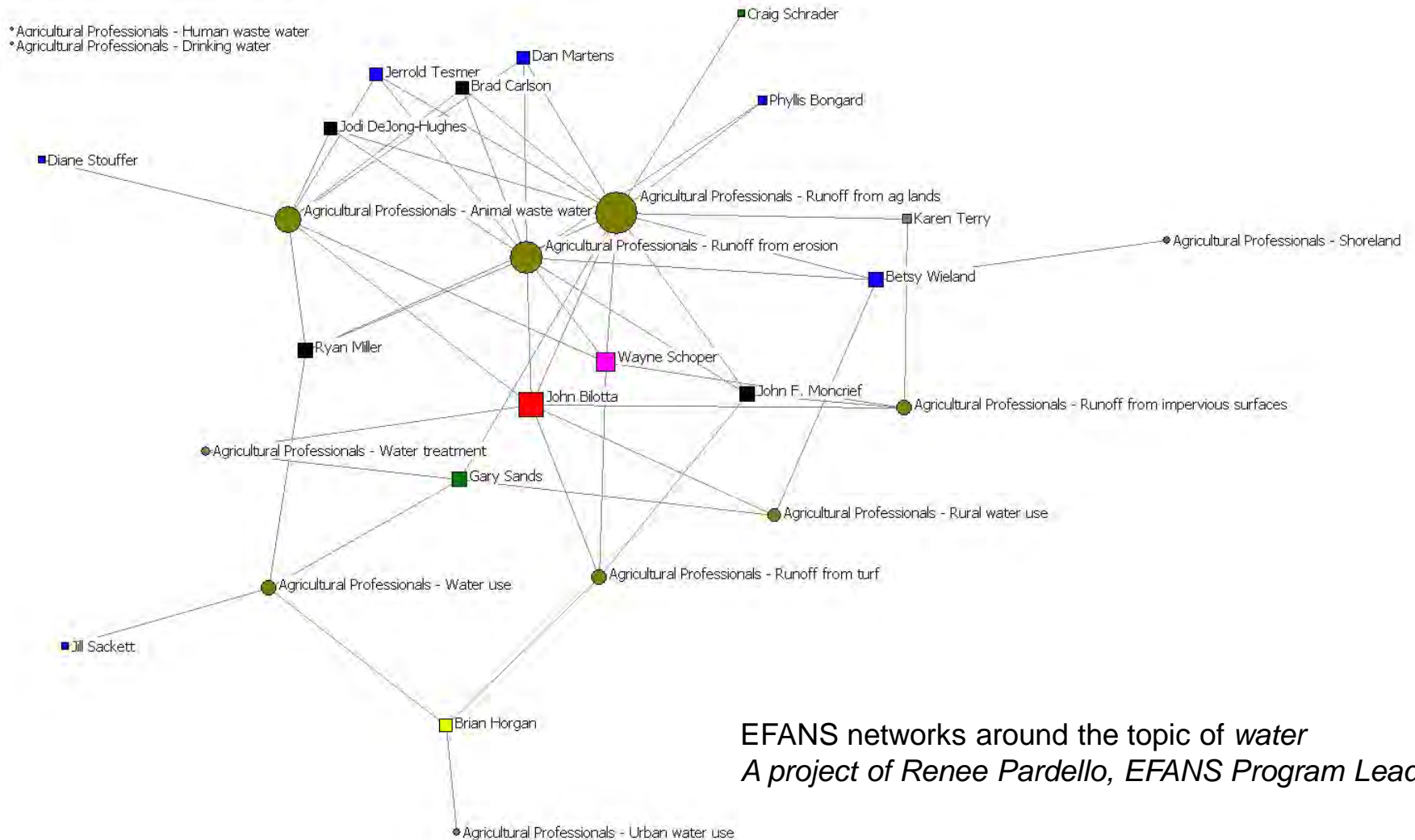
Which topics and audiences do you work with?		Audiences			
		Farmers	Ag. Professionals	K12 Teachers	Etc.
Topics	Shoreland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Water use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Animal waste water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EFANS networks around the topic of *water*
A project of Renee Pardello, EFANS Program Leader

Strategy #2: Example map of services

Topic: Water

Audience: Agric. Professionals



EFANS networks around the topic of *water*
A project of Renee Pardello, EFANS Program Leader

Leveraging Networks, Practical Strategies

#3: Self-assessment of professional network

1. Make a list of who, specifically, you work with, internally and/or externally.
2. Categorize these individuals into groups that influence the work you do or the outcomes/impacts you pursue.
3. Do you have enough of each category? (knowledge/influence)

More information EFANS Networks and how to develop them

More info on [evaluationresources intranet page](#)

Tom Bartholomay, EFANS Evaluation and Research Specialist
Extension Center for Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
612-626-2162 | barth020@umn.edu
extension.umn.edu