



EEA Celebrates 25 Years

The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia has been serving environmental educators throughout the state since 1992, and we will be celebrating our 25th anniversary during the 2016-17 year. From a small group of dedicated members 25 years ago, EEA has grown to a statewide organization, supporting environmental educators through conferences, workshops, grants, networking, and so much more!

According to Ranger Jerry Hightower (Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, EEA Advisory Council Chair, and Council of Outdoor Learning Chair), one of the organization's founding members, "EEA grew out of the ashes, so to speak, of the Georgia Environmental Education Council. The GEEC had been in existence since 1964, but abruptly dissolved. In 1991, some non-formal environmental educators realized the need for a professional organization, and in November of 1992, the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia was born. That was a time of considerable support and enthusiasm for EE."

EEA was founded as a self-governed, non-profit organization that promotes communication and education among professionals in the field of environmental education. In 1994, EEA held its first annual conference. "This was deemed a big success," adds Hightower. "I think we had 80 participants. We had killer field trips and good sessions. The next conference continued that success."

Following that, the Outdoor Classroom Council was established in 1996, Monarchs Across Georgia in 2000, and the Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia program in 2007, along with many other accomplishments. Since 1992, EEA has served as the professional education and networking association for environmental educators throughout Georgia with the vision of promoting a culture of environmental literacy and stewardship. EEA believes environmental education encourages inquiry, investigation, and the development of skills that enable responsible decisions and actions that positively impact the environment.

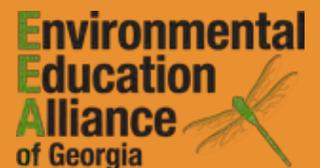
Celebrate EEA's 25th Anniversary at these Upcoming Events!

- August 13, 2016 • Flint River Exploration Member Event • Flint RiverQuarium, Albany
- September 10-11, 2016 • Fall Line Adventure Member Event • Phinizy Center for Water Sciences, Augusta
- October 14, 2016 • Outdoor Learning Symposium • Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Atlanta
- March 3-5, 2017 • Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance Regional Conference and Research Symposium • Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center, Buford
- April 8-9, 2016 • Park Paddlers Member Event • Stephen C. Foster State Park and Crooked River State Park

See page 8 for more details!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Facility Spotlight: Flint RiverQuarium	2
Citizen Science Projects	4
Pro Bono Partnership	5
Nature Meditation	6
2016 OLS: Save the Date	7
Upcoming Member Events	8
2017 SEEA Conference: Call for Proposals	8
Member Spotlight: Mallorie Lanier	9
ATEEG Courses	10
Organization Spotlight: Hickory Hill	11



Flint RiverQuarium

Telling the Story of Water

by Wendy Bellacomo

Flint RiverQuarium Marketing Manager

One of only a few outdoor aquariums in the world, the beautiful one-of-a-kind building, designed by internationally renowned architect Antoine Predock, wraps around a re-created blue-hole spring. The RiverQuarium showcases the animals and plants native to the Flint, from its headwaters south of Atlanta all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. The exhibits, which include fresh and salt water tanks, a hatchery, and high-tech interactives, were created by the nationally known exhibit design firm, Lyons-Zaremba of Boston, Massachusetts. An aviary, home to more than 30 native birds, opened in 2008, adding yet another dimension for visitors.

Unique programming provides new and ever-changing experiences at the RiverQuarium. Activities, such as Discovery Days, held the first and third Sundays of each month, engage the entire family in learning adventures as they explore different monthly themes through games, crafts, and hands-on activities. Tadpole Time, a monthly event designed specifically for preschoolers, introduces children and their parents to the RiverQuarium through age-appropriate activities such as story time, songs, and simple crafts. Summer camps give elementary and middle school ages a chance to explore



the RiverQuarium in-depth during one-week sessions. Other ongoing programming, such as dive shows, alligator feedings, and animal presentations, ensure that every visit has something new to offer.

Permanent Exhibits

The highlight of the Flint RiverQuarium is the amazing 175,000-gallon, 22-foot deep RiverQuarium Blue Hole Spring, showcasing Southwest Georgia's unique underwater world. Explore it from the surface to the depths through a panorama of discovery points. See more than 120 kinds of fish, turtles, alligators, snapping turtles, and other creatures that make the RiverQuarium Blue Hole their home.

The **Flint River Gallery** features both freshwater and saltwater tanks, plus a live fish hatchery, to give you a first-hand look at life all along the river's path. Follow the Flint River's amazing 350-mile journey and learn about the vital role the river plays in sustaining life for thousands of curious creatures.

Discovery Caverns puts you in control of nature with fun games and eye-opening exhibits. Control the weather. Change the way a river flows. Explore an underground cave to uncover mysterious subterranean creatures.

Located on the banks of the Flint River, the Flint RiverQuarium tells a story as old as time itself – the story of water – in a fresh new way. The Flint RiverQuarium was designed both to entertain and to inform by interpreting the importance of water, conservation, and environmental issues that impact the entire southeastern United States. By focusing on the ecosystem of the Flint River watershed, a universal tale of water and its value begin to emerge.



Continued on page 3

Flint RiverQuarium... Continued from page 2

The **World of Water** gives you an insider's view of other rivers around the globe that share similar features and challenges with the Flint.

Spring Run Creek is where the alligators lurk. Looking through the all glass aquarium, visitors are submerged into the habitat of these ancient reptiles.

Cypress Pond Aviary, a 35-foot-high enclosure, houses passerine and wading birds indigenous to the Flint River basin. The Flint RiverQuarium aviary is the only site in Georgia that accepts non-releasable native waterfowl, wading birds, and songbirds. Since the Albany area is in a major flyway, several migratory birds also are featured in the aviary.



The **Imagination Theater** features films that explore the natural wonders of our world. Complete movie listings and times can be found at www.flintriverquarium.com.

Special Events held throughout the year include the Water, Wings, and Wildlife Festival in September and a series of holiday activities in December. Dates and details on these events can be found online at www.flintriverquarium.com.

Rental

The RiverQuarium is available for rental after hours and is a spectacular venue for events ranging from wedding receptions to convention gatherings. A number of different rental options are available, including theater rental and both partial and complete rental of the RiverQuarium. Children's birthday party packages also are available and include invitations, cake, party favors, and a gift for the birthday child. A birthday party host gives the group a guided tour of the RiverQuarium, complete with a live animal encounter.

Location and Hours

The Flint RiverQuarium is located at 101 Pine Avenue in downtown Albany, Georgia. Regular operating hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10am to 5pm and Sunday, 1pm to 5pm.

For more information please contact:

Wendy Bellacomo • wbellacomo@flintriverquarium.com

117 Pine Avenue, Albany, GA 31701

(229) 639-2650 or Toll Free: 877-GOFLINT

Fax: (229) 639-2707

www.flintriverquarium.com



SIX PROJECTS FOR CITIZEN SCIENTISTS LIKE YOU

by Liz Swafford

Dalton-Whitfield Solid Waste Authority and Keep Dalton-Whitfield Beautiful
EEA Regional Director - North

Remember participating in your school's science fair and watching a homemade model volcano erupt in a flood of gooey lava? Perhaps you presented a scientific study of your own following the rules of the scientific method including the purpose, hypothesis, materials, procedure, data, results, and conclusion on a large tri-fold display. Questions like "Which popcorn brand pops best?" and "How do dark and light impact the speed of banana browning?" are just two of the thousands of science projects presented at science fairs across the country each year.

Making a science project to get a grade at school doesn't need to be a one-time experience. What if you could participate in a project now that would help a professional scientist with their current research? Welcome to the world of citizen science! You too can be a scientist supporting professional researchers by submitting data, sharing experiences, or sharing valuable information. Just like young students preparing science projects, scientists and researchers need data – lots of it – and they need your help to get it.

Citizen science programs vary by topic, location, and collection method, but the goal is the same, to collect data at a local level with the help of volunteers. SciStarter.com, an online database of citizen science projects, describes them as "science we can do together." Types of projects you can participate in include monitoring and reporting data about wildlife, birds, insects, reptiles, water, weather, pollution, sounds, and human behavior. The oldest citizen science project is the Audubon Society's annual Christmas

Bird Count, celebrating 117 years in December.

Data collection can be done as an individual, a family, or as an educational activity for students. The majority of programs provide printable field guides, mobile apps, and websites to report data at no cost to participants. Data collected and reported by a citizen scientist is recorded in a database or interactive map that may be available to the public and other researchers.



The Lost Ladybug Project relies on volunteer citizen scientist to collect the data it needs to study ladybug populations.

Adding a hands-on data collection component to a science class is a great way to get students actively involved in the scientific process and may inspire them to become a professional scientist themselves. Many programs offer lesson plans with correlated teaching standards to tie in to current topics of study. Yet even for non-students, citizen science is a way for people of all ages to learn about their local environment. Here are several citizen science programs you may find interesting.

Lost Lady Bug Project: Native ladybug populations are declining while non-native species are increasing in numbers and range. Help track native ladybugs by reporting sightings to Cornell University through the Lost Lady Bug Project. Visit their website to learn how to find and photograph ladybugs. Then, go outdoors to collect ladybugs, photograph them, and report your findings online.

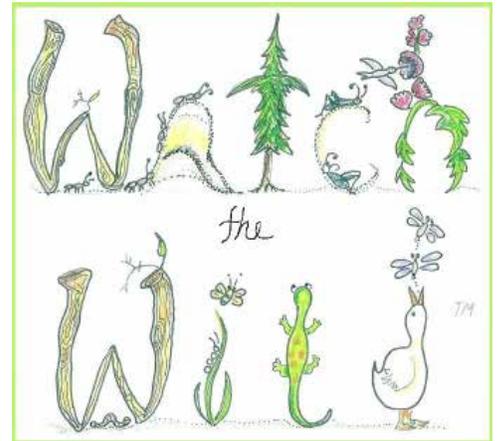
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Citizen Science Projects... Continued from page 4

Christmas Bird Count: Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count, a wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations, runs from mid-December to early January. Volunteers collect data using bird guides, checklists, and binoculars to spot birds, then later submit data online. A panel of experts reviews the data before making it available to the public and researchers for review and scientific study.

Watch the Wild: Volunteers are invited to report observations of trees, plants, water, temperature, and wildlife activity in their community year round. Locations to observe may include a local park, forested area, or even your backyard. Observation forms and photos should be submitted regularly to study changes in ecosystems. While the collected data is not available to the public, it is shared with reputable scientists, institutions, and agencies.

Journey North: This global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change offers more than ten citizen science projects such as hummingbird and monarch butterfly sightings and weather changes. Sightings and observations can be reported online or through the mobile app, called Journey North. Data is made available online with interactive maps so that migration patterns can be tracked in real time.



Southern Cricket Frog (Acris gryllus)

Credit: University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory Herpetology Program. srelherp.uga.edu

FrogWatch USA: The Association of Zoos and Aquariums has managed a study about wetlands for over fifteen years. Every year, from February through August, volunteers report data on the calls of local frogs and toads to assess the health of the habitat. Field guides, reporting forms, and recordings of frog calls are all available online.

Project BudBurst: This tool for recording plant observations is helping scientist study plants and their reactions to changing climate. Volunteers may collect data on an ongoing basis or just one time on any number of plants and trees they choose. A one-time report, for example, can be the date the apple tree in your back yard flowered. An ongoing report would include the dates that the same tree had buds or lost it leaves.

Liz Swafford, EEA board member, is the Recycling and Education Program Coordinator for the Dalton-Whitfield Solid Waste Authority and Executive Director of Keep Dalton-Whitfield Beautiful. Contact her at 706-278-5001, or email swafford@dswswa.org.

EEA & the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta

WE ARE PLEASED to announce that the [Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta](#) has accepted EEA as a client. EEA will now receive free legal services and council from the Partnership. This new partnership will be a great resource for EEA and its members, helping us to continue our mission and maintain professionalism and transparency. We hope to strengthen and protect EEA for our current membership and for future environmental educators in Georgia.

EEA's Executive Committee will work with the Partnership to ensure that organizational governance and policies reflect best practices. Former EEA President, Robby Astrove, adds, "We are very pleased about this relationship and the opportunity to update, improve, and protect EEA."

A NATURE MEDITATION

A Guided Practice of Being Mindful in Nature

by Mark Coleman & Sara Overton

Originally published in the Children & Nature Network blog,
[The New Nature Movement](#). Jun 29, 2016

From the book, *Awake in the Wild*, by Mark Coleman; adapted by Sara Overton. Coleman and Overton are collaborating on a mindfulness in nature art project, "[The Awake in the Wild Experience](#)." (This meditation begins on page 18 of the book.)

Biting into a sweet summer strawberry is one of life's great pleasures. Nature is full of such joys when we can open to them. Exploring mindfully helps us do just that. Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains the mind to cultivate awareness, clarity, and an array of positive qualities. The following is a meditation that can help bring mindfulness to your experience in nature. Ideally, find a quiet place in nature where you can connect to the earth. If you are indoors, you can adapt parts of this exercise using a houseplant.

The Meditation Begins

At first, walk around this place the way you normally might be in nature. Notice what it feels like in your body to be in a place while only casually connecting to it. Now, barefoot if possible, feel the weight of your body through your feet and toes. Let your feet sink into connecting with the earth, and pay attention to how it feels in each foot. Begin walking on the earth, and feel the tickling grasses warmed in the sun.

Observe how it feels to engage or participate through the sense of touch and how that changes your relationship to this place.

After some time, reach down and dig your hands into the earth. Feel the texture of the earth in your fingers – is it gritty, muddy, or silky? Notice how it smells. Allow yourself to play with the earth, grasses, and stones, as a child might play in a mud puddle or a sand box. Rub the earth on your skin.

Continue your slow walk, exploring the plant life around you. Try rubbing fragrant bay leaves or lavender or other flowers and leaves in the palm of your hands and inhaling their fragrance. Feel the roughness of the bark of an old tree trunk with your hands, fingers, and arms. Taste some wild, edible berries.

Sit down and open your awareness to sounds, letting your mind expand to the furthest sound, so your attention is receptive and open. Similarly, take some time to absorb this place with your eyes – not looking for anything in particular, just allowing whatever you see to touch you.

Continued on page 7



A Nature Meditation... Continued from page 6

Take some time to sit quietly under a tree or bask in warm sunlight. Let your senses drift open and outward. Breathe through every pore of your skin and soak up the ambience, the cadence, and the spirit of this place. Feel into the fact that you are a part of this living, breathing ecosystem.

Be mindful of a simple joy or sense of aliveness that may come with this intimate contact. Notice how it can deepen your sense of connectedness, intimacy, and interest.



While you are feeling open in this place, be aware that you are in a relationship with all kinds of life forms – including grasses, insects, birds, or animals that sense your presence but remain invisible. As you feel, engage in a relationship with this place, be aware of any shifts in your body, your breath, your heart, and your mind.

About the Authors: Mark Coleman & Sara Overton

Mark Coleman is author of [Awake in the Wild: Mindfulness in Nature as a Path of Self-Discovery](#), and is also a poet. Based in Mill Valley, California, he is a teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and has been leading insight meditation retreats worldwide since 1997. Artist Sara Overton is collaborating with Mark Coleman on [The Awake in the Wild Experience \(AWE\)](#). AWE is a mindfulness in nature art project that brings participants into intimate connection with the natural world through nature-inspired contemplations.

“A NATURE MEDITATION: A Guided Practice of Being Mindful in Nature” reprinted with permission of the Children & Nature Network, www.childrenandnature.org. © 2016 Mark Coleman & Sara Overton.

save the date



10.14.16

The Council of Outdoor Learning Presents

THE OUTDOOR LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy • Atlanta, Georgia

eealliance.org/outdoor-learning-symposium

Upcoming Member Events

Flint River Exploration

Saturday, August 13th, 2016, 10:30am - 3:30pm

Flint RiverQuarium, Albany

Activities: Take guided tours of the Flint RiverQuarium, watch an Imagination Theater movie, and hike a three mile stretch of the Riverfront/Greenway Trail. This three mile guided excursion will introduce you to southwest Georgia and the Flint River. You will also be taken on a general exhibit tour to view all of our animals and a behind-the-scenes tour of the care involved in animal husbandry at our facility.

Cost: \$5 registration fee plus \$35 admission fee plus lunch.

Registration deadline: Saturday, August 6th



Explore Pinizy Swamp Nature Park in Augusta at our September member event.

Fall Line Adventure

Saturday, September 10th, 2016 at 2:00pm -

Sunday, September 11th, 2016 at 3:00pm

Pinizy Swamp Nature Park, Augusta

Activities: The Fall Line runs directly through Augusta, GA. Come explore habitats of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain as we discover the birds and trees of Pinizy Swamp, hike the stunning landscapes of Heggie's Rock Preserve, and cruise down the Savannah River. Camp in a primitive site (access to water and bathrooms, no showers or electricity) at Pinizy Swamp Nature Park for \$8.

Cost: \$5 EEA registration fee plus \$20 Savannah River Cruise ticket, Friday dinner, Sunday lunch, and lodging.

Park Paddlers Club Challenge Part III

Saturday, April 8th, 2017 at 10:00am - Sunday, April 9th, 2017 at 3:00pm

Stephen C. Foster State Park and Crooked River State Park

Activities: Kayak the Okefenokee Swamp to historic Billy's Landing and back in Stephen C. Foster (look for alligators, black bears, and wood storks) and on a tidal river thru salt marsh and past sandbars in Crooked River (look for dolphins and fiddler crabs). Lunch along the way. Out to supper together. Lodging in a nearby motel.

Cost: \$5 EEA registration fee plus two lunches, supper, breakfast, two nights lodging in a motel, kayak rental (if needed).

Learn more and register at www.eealliance.org/member-field-excursions.

2017 Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance Conference

The Call for Proposals is now open!

Research Symposium - Friday, March 3rd

Researchers are invited to share their work with environmental educators from across the southeast at the SEEA Research Symposium. Environmental Education and Environmental Science based research presentations are encouraged. Share results, methods, lessons learned, and the problems encountered through poster sessions and oral presentations.

The Conference - Saturday & Sunday, March 4th-5th

Share your experience with other educators with a session presentation within one of the three strands: Practice, Profession, Partnerships.

Save the Date

March 3-5, 2017

SEEA Conference &
Research Symposium

*Gwinnett Environmental
& Heritage Center*

**Environmental
Education
Alliance
of Georgia**

www.eealliance.org

www.southeastee.org

The deadline to submit your proposal is **September 1, 2016**. Learn more and submit at the [Conference webpage](#).

FRESH FACES, FRESH IDEAS

Featuring EEA's Newer Members

by Sonya Wood Mahler
Cobb County Water System
EEA Member Services Chair

Next time you are at an EEA event, be sure you get a moment to talk with **Mallore Lanier**. Mallore is the Education Programs Interpreter at the [Flint RiverQuarium](#) in Albany, Georgia. She has been there just over a year.

Finding EEA

Mallore joined EEA in October of 2015 just in time for the Outdoor Learning Symposium at Fortson 4-H Center.

Day to day environmental education

At the Flint RiverQuarium, Mallore manages the interpretive information from the Education Department as well as teaching Wet Lab classes, leading tours, and implementing the center's new educational garden programs. Before working at the RiverQuarium, she worked as a naturalist and environmental educator at McDowell Environmental Center in northwest Alabama. There, she taught school children different skills and classes in an outdoor, deciduous, mountain environment. Before that she worked at the Jekyll Island 4-H Environmental Education Center for two seasons as an environmental educator. On Jekyll Island, she taught school groups about coastal barrier island ecology.



Favorite thing about being an environmental educator

Mallore's favorite thing about environmental education, in any place that she has worked and with any class, is seeing the "lightbulb" come on in a child's brain when they "get it." It's getting to see the moment that they realize that everything is connected, each organism is important and has its place, and there is something that they can do about conserving and saving it.

Best moment working with kids

While working at Jekyll, a Title I school visited and Mallore had a group of 3rd grade boys. Three quarters of the boys had never seen the ocean before, and one little boy got so excited about finding and picking up seashells. During their beach class, she showed them her shell collection, and he asked if he could have them. She explained that she needed them for teaching but that she would help him look for his own shells. Later he came up to her very excited about a shell, and she informed him he had found a Lettered Olive. It happened to be her favorite and the one shell she didn't have. She told him it was her favorite, and he offered it to her. The fact that this little 3rd grader - who had never been to the beach and had found this perfect shell - was willing to give it to her is something that she will never forget, along with the smile on his face. And yes, at the end of the week, that little boy went home with several shells from Mallore's personal collection - how could she have said no after that?

Continued on page 10

Fresh Faces, Fresh Ideas... Continued from page 9

Therapy

Away from work, Malloree's therapy is being in the kitchen. She loves to bake and cook for people. Her other therapy is being behind a camera lens - going out and exploring places and seeing how many little, unnoticed creatures and photo ops she can find.

Impressions of EEA so far

Malloree feels like she is still so new to the EEA community. She loves all of the opportunities that are presented through this new relationship and looks forward to getting more involved with EEA.



Join ATEEG's Newest Cohort

[Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia](#) (ATEEG) is a nationally accredited, professional certification program for formal and non-formal educators based on the [North American Association for Environmental Education](#) (NAAEE) Guidelines for Excellence. This certification program is designed to expand your knowledge of instructional techniques, provide great networking opportunities, and teach program evaluation strategies.

Core Course 1 • September 9-11, 2016 • "Foundations of Environmental Education", the first of three courses an educator can take to receive a Certificate in Environmental Education, focuses on the concepts of environmental literacy, the history of environmental education, and environmental education research.

Core Course 2 • November 18-20, 2016 • "Fostering Learning" focuses on the concepts of instructional methods, environmental education materials and resources, best practices, and curriculum planning.

Core Course 3 • January 27-29, 2017 • "Evaluation and Assessment" increases participant's skills and knowledge associated with the program evaluation process that includes identifying outcomes, data collection methods, and data analysis and interpretation.

Each of these courses will be held at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield, GA, beginning at 1:00 PM on Friday and adjourning at noon on Sunday. The registration fee is \$275 per course for EEA members and \$300 for non-members. Course fees include all materials, supplies, and meals.

For more information, please contact the ATEEG Program Administrator at ATEEG@eealliance.org or visit the website at www.eealliance.org/ateeg.

Hickory Hill, located in Thomson, Georgia, is the historic home of Thomas E. Watson. The center offers a diverse range of interactive and educational programs, covering topics from history to environmental science. Field trips and activities are free for educational groups, grade appropriate, and tailored to align with a variety of National and Georgia Performance Standards. Michelle Zupan, Curator at Hickory Hill, recently shared her organization's EEA story:

Organization Spotlight: Hickory Hill

"Our organization has been a member of EEA for over 10 years. We are one of the few historic house museums in the United States that actively includes environmental education in our school programs, summer camps, and outreach - much of that influence due to our relationship with EEA and some of the wonderful people who have been active in EEA over the years."

Thank you, Hickory Hill, for sharing your testimonial with us! To find out more about Hickory Hill and their education programming, visit their website at www.hickory-hill.org.



Photos from Hickory Hill's Eco-Adventures Summer Camp, an annual, weeklong day camp that includes everything from organic gardening to studying water quality.



Find us on Facebook and Twitter for pictures, program updates, upcoming events, articles of interest, grant opportunities, and more!

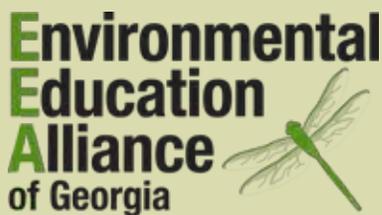


Shop at Kroger and Amazon, Earn Money for EEA!

You can now support EEA by shopping at Kroger and on Amazon. Help EEA earn up to \$8000 per quarter by signing up for both of these programs below:

[Register your Kroger Plus Card](#)
[Select EEA as your charitable organization on AmazonSmile.](#)
 Search for "Environmental Educational Alliance Inc."

We'd love to hear from you! For comments and article suggestions or submissions, please email news@eealliance.org.



P.O. Box 768081
 Roswell, GA 30076
www.EEAlliance.org

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For board member bios, roles and committees, and contact information, visit the Board of Directors page of the EEA website: www.eealliance.org/board-of-directors.