



EREF Moves in New Strategic Direction, Expanding into the Sustainable Materials Management Space

Raleigh, NC (November 14, 2019) – The Environmental Research & Education Foundation (EREF) has held a long history of funding innovative research that the industry needs to move forward and adapt to changes in policy and management. The Foundation will be taking this to the next level in the coming months, stepping further into the sustainable materials management space.

While the Foundation has funded research projects and other initiatives related to sustainable materials management in the past, this new strategic direction will see EREF in the driver's seat, directly managing relationships with all participants in the circular economy including manufacturers, brands, consumers and, of course, the waste industry. These new relationships will open doors to untapped constituents who can benefit from the Foundation's research and provide data to inform EREF studies.

EREF's growth into this space comes at a time when a number of industries are in search of solutions to more efficiently reuse and reduce waste. Given the high rate of contamination in recycling and the 2017 China ban, the viability of recycling, which for years has been hailed as the optimal method of decreasing environmental burden, has been called into question. What is the answer to less waste? Is it greater focus on public education? Is it more sustainable packaging? One simple answer does not exist, but EREF recognizes that ensuring all players have access to credible science and the current state of practice affecting the life-cycle of a product is necessary for an open dialogue to occur, which then proctors solutions.

"Expansion into sustainable materials is a natural progression of EREF's mission. We've occupied that space for years, through projects like the Solid Waste Optimization Life-Cycle Framework (SWOLF) model, and it only makes sense that we take on a bigger role," said Bryan Staley, EREF President and CEO. "EREF is well-positioned to have a huge impact on the way materials are sourced, produced and disposed of."

Current initiatives will continue: Grants, Scholarships, Data & Policy, Education, Internship in Excellence and the MSW eTextbook. Research and data from these programs will inform conversations with new constituents.

With this expansion comes a need for additional full-time staff who can build and manage the relationships and content.

EREF is excited to announce that Debra Kantner has transitioned from the Data & Policy Program Director to the Sustainability Director. In this role, Debra will evaluate the sustainability of end-of-life options for discarded materials, track and communicate current scientific findings and help educate product manufacturers and consumers regarding sustainable materials management strategies. An aspect of this will include internal research and data aggregation efforts.

The Foundation is currently searching for a Sustainability Development Coordinator/Manager who will be responsible for primary relationship building, marketing and promotion of EREF's efforts to engage upstream product/packaging manufacturers that evaluates sustainable materials management.

Additional open positions are:

- Program Manager – Data & Policy Program
- Data Analyst – Data & Policy Program

To learn more about these three positions, including how to apply, [click here](#).

EREF is a 501(c)3 class charity that funds and directs scientific research and educational initiatives for waste management practices to benefit industry participants and the communities they serve. For more complete information on EREF funded research, its scholarship program and how to donate to this great cause, visit erefdn.org.

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Media Contact:

Catherine Ardoin, Communications Manager

Phone: 919.861.6876 ext. 109

Email: cardoin@erefdn.org