



EREF Unveils New Strategic Plan and Updated Vision and Mission Statements to Encompass Broader Sustainability Initiatives

These new statements tie into the Foundation's new 5-year strategic plan.

Raleigh, NC (September 7, 2021) – The [Environmental Research & Education Foundation \(EREF\)](https://www.erefdn.org) announces a new 5-year strategic plan and new vision and mission statements.

Since 1992, EREF has funded over \$19 million in research and education specific to solid waste management, until two years ago when [the Foundation announced](#) its expansion into the sustainable materials management space.

After months laying the groundwork, the EREF Board of Directors has unveiled a new 5-year strategic plan. Under this new direction, EREF will further branch out into the sustainability space, aiming to build relationships with and unite every aspect of the circular economy.

This new plan and expansion into sustainable materials management comes at a time of increased corporate focus on social responsibility driven by consumer interest, increased regulatory focus on extended producer responsibility, and roadblocks to sustainability such as technological limitations, greenwashing and limited consumer education. Sustainable materials management requires cooperation from a number of parties, including manufacturers, brands, consumers and the waste industry, and EREF seeks to advance science, data availability and knowledge, as well as open dialogue across the circular economy.

“Throughout my time working in solid waste, I have watched the waste industry progress and face new challenges, and EREF has been actively involved in providing the needed research and education,” said Pat Carroll, EREF’s Board Chair. “However, to truly advance sustainable waste management, there has to be dialogue across numerous industries and EREF is primed to initiate this dialogue. The expansion of the mission and implementation of the new strategic plan has been a long time coming. There are great things coming for the Foundation and waste management.”

Over recent years, EREF has positioned itself to successfully implement these new initiatives and have these conversations by creating a sustainability program and investing in additional staff with the experience to take the Foundation to the next level.

With this, EREF’s vision and mission statements have broadened to incorporate the circular economy.

New Vision

To light the way towards a more circular economy.

New Mission

To advance scientific research and create educational pathways that enable innovation in sustainable waste management practices.

“The waste sector is part of a broader community, and we have a strong role to play in driving towards a more circular economy,” said Tara Hemmer, EREF Board member and Strategic Planning Committee Chair. “This was a key theme that went into EREF’s new strategic plan. Over the next five years, you are going to see the Foundation driving conversations aimed at advancing sustainability and connecting to the circular economy.”

EREF's current core programs will continue: Research Grants, Scholarships, Education and Data & Policy; however, they will incorporate sustainability and the circular economy and will be leveraged to inform conversations with new constituents.

With this new 5-year plan comes a stronger focus on development and marketing/communications. As EREF moves further into the sustainability space, this opens doors to new stakeholders and audiences.

Staff have already begun the process of implementing the Foundation's new goals and objectives – be on the lookout for exciting things to come from EREF.

EREF is a 501(c)3 class charity that advances scientific research and creates educational pathways that enable innovation in sustainable waste management practices. 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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