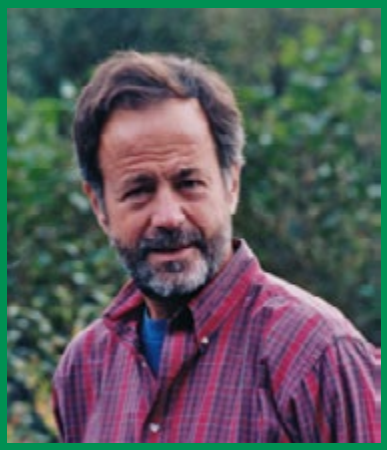

EGA Journal

30th
ANNIVERSARY
1987–2017

Contents

Introduction: EGA Turns 30

BY RACHEL LEON

"Kudos to Donald Ross, Jon Jensen, and all of EGA's founders for bringing the small band of grantmakers together on that snowy day in DC to begin what has become a powerful force in broadening and developing environmental grantmaking. Without their foresight, leadership and sweat equity we would not be here today. Looking back all these years, the EGA's vision and value is clear. Here is to 30 more."

—Steve Viederman, Founding Member of EGA

As EGA turns 30, I am keenly aware that it has been almost a decade since I came to EGA as Executive Director. When I first arrived, delving into the deep culture of the organization and stepping into the shoes of earlier leaders of EGA was intimidating. I felt like an anthropologist studying a different species; trying to learn the ways and patterns of an organization that itself was a living, breathing organism unlike any I had worked with prior.

But from my first day to today, it is clear what is at the core of EGA, and why it matters. The passion, expertise, commitment, and drive in our collective community, and the levels of collaboration, debate and discord created in this space, are the beating heart of this organization.

This 30th Anniversary Journal is different in that it doesn't just include funder perspectives, but also includes reflections from all 21 of our University of Michigan SEAS/EGA Environmental Fellows, who were placed at foundations and NGOS across the country this past summer. These fellows are poised to be future leaders in our community, and the greater environmental field. Their voices are an important addition to this journal, our Retreat and our community.

There is much to be proud of in the accomplishments of this community through the decades. The Founders deserve humble acknowledgment for creating this space and thinking boldly about our joint goals. The Board deserves immense appreciation for providing vision and creativity in evolving the work of EGA. Tracking the Field now provides more than 80,000 grants at member's fingertips and our analysis of that data give us new insight into gaps and trends on where our community is funding and what we still need to address. With our global engagement focus, we have created lasting partnership with philanthropists in China and across the globe, including a deep dive into Africa this year.

While we still have a long way to go, we are making strides on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Leadership from our board, including supporting our groundbreaking Fellows program with Dr. Dorceta Taylor, new member energy and initiatives and the fact that equity is front and center in all we do, is helping bring long overdue change. Our new partnerships with freshwater funders and the Blue Sky Funders Forum are vital additions to the community as well as our long term and renewed collaboration with affinity partners.

At the same time, the stark moment we find ourselves in, with what feels like weekly disasters—whether they be environmental, social or challenges to our democratic institution itself—means we cannot rest on our laurels in any sense. We want to ensure with this 30th anniversary, and with every day for this organization, that we are focusing forward, challenging ourselves as an institution, and actively identifying what is needed to best support people, place, and planet. I walk into the office every day questioning everything we do, how we do it, and how we might do it better because we need to make every ounce of our efforts match what is at stake—which is our collective future.

We won't always get it right—but just by growing our community and keeping our heart beating strong by taking new risks—we both honor where we come from and face each new day with new allies and new perspectives, ultimately becoming more resilient to what is ahead.

I am so thankful for the team, Board, and our entire EGA community.

From Monocultures to Polycultures: A Wish for EGA's next 30 years

BY LEE WASSERMAN

When the Family Fund joined with a handful of other funders to start EGA thirty years ago, we could hardly imagine the number of foundations that would eventually become part of the new affinity group.

Legend has it that the attendees of the first EGA meeting could fit in a hot tub. (I'm not suggesting that's where they met, of course.) Now, EGA conference planners can hardly find appropriate facilities capable of accommodating the nearly 500 hundred attendees who regularly attend EGA's annual meeting.

But more impressive than EGA's size is its vibrancy. A multitude of program areas have been crowding under the environmental tent. At any given meeting, I have spoken to funders focused on energy, agricultural, human health, climate, water, air, urban planning, race, class, biodiversity, endangered species, toxics, conservation, ecosystem preservation and restoration, transportation, environmental and climate justice, citizen engagement, democracy building, and a whole lot more. Environmental problems have many expressions, but we increasingly recognize that the root of almost all these harms is society's inability to acknowledge nature's fascia that ropes humans and all living things together in one big mosh-pit of interdependence.

As EGA reaches thirty—we're not a kid anymore!—it's appropriate to take stock of where we are before we find ourselves full of regrets for what could have been. On the plus side, EGAers attempt to address a multitude problems with an admirable sense of commitment and purpose. We are bright, often professionally trained, work well with others and listen politely (for the most part). As a community, we welcome and are happy to hear from new funders. These attributes have led to significant progress. But given the deteriorating state of the world, I think it's safe to say we need to do better, and do better quickly.

Here is one thing that has struck me. As diverse as funders are programmatically, we are as narrow in the kind of activities we support. How did we find ourselves operating within so few precincts of civil society? As a committed EGAer for more than twenty years, and in the spirit of our early, enthusiastic organizers, let me offer a few thoughts.

Funders, generally, are a conservative lot in our approach to issues. This leads to a number of self-imposed limitations. I'm guilty of some myself. Here are a few:

1. **Our programs are almost all geared toward the right side of the brain**—we spend a lot of time and money working on the best policy, economics, and science. History seems pretty clear, however, that big transformational changes are made first through people's guts, not their brains. We don't communicate much with the public, and when we do, we're not that good at it. Of course, it's hard for grantees to authentically communicate when they are not located where the public lives, works, and attends houses of worship.

2. **We tend to be herd-runners.** There usually is a conventional wisdom about what funders in a given area should be working on. We can't fund everything, of course. Sometimes resources need to be aggregated to take on major challenges. But since no one knows how we can make necessary progress quickly enough, I think it makes more sense to fund with a sense of experimentation and possibility, and learn as we go.

3. **We're lovers not fighters.** This characteristic makes us nice people, but limits our effectiveness in the rough and tumble of U.S. policy struggles. EGA members cumulatively spend an enormous amount in the policy arena, which is dominated by entrenched interests who do what is necessary to remain entrenched. We can be humble warriors, but if we are to succeed, we need to

mix it up more, take uncomfortable risks, and bring a spirit of engagement that is consistent with the scope of the problem. I can't think of any big transformational change that occurred by having well-crafted policies smartly presented in a series of Capital Hill meetings.

4. **We don't fund enough community-based groups serving real constituencies.** I recognize this is hard to do well for many reasons. But real change almost always comes from below. Big, established organizations have important work to do, but the percentage of the total EGA-member budget these big groups consume is not justified by the collective progress they have made. We need people from a rainbow of organizations building true civic power in their communities and states around these issues.

5. **We're a pretty center-left crowd.** Nothing wrong with being progressive. But I think our cultural and political comfort-zone has closed us off to a range of ideas that we need to consider, if not endorse. Virtually all our presenters come from the same political, cultural milieu, which limits our imagination and dulls our senses. Monocultures have a hard time thriving.

6. **Finally, let's embrace our ignorance.** Recognizing we don't have all the answers brings an openness to explore new approaches, ideas, and theories of change. It also underscores the need for EGA to exist and flourish. This is hard work and we need colleagues to lift this load together as we explore a variety of pathways forward.

Here's to thirty more years of great collaboration. Onward!

LEE WASSERMAN has served as Director of the Rockefeller Family Fund (RFF) since 1999. Prior to joining RFF, Lee was Advisor to The Pew Charitable Trusts where he designed and implemented major program initiatives. He is a board member of Environmental Advocates of New York, a member of the Steering Committee for the Scholars Strategy Network, and a past president of the Environmental Federation of New York.

We Are The Cure

BY ALEXIS CURETON
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Since my childhood, I have always understood the duality of the world in which I live in. As personified by Newton's third law of physics, "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." The action of me being socially identified as an African American, incites the inheritance of suffering under the conditions of that "identity." My pursuit in life, like leaders of this identity before me, has been to study this suffering and find means to lessen it for generations to come.

Through my sociological studies at Clark Atlanta University, I have been able to create a lens in which the degrees of suffering under my identity could be better understood without judgment or prejudice. This, however could not be possible without context. This 'context' was provided through my graduate studies that focused on the energy industry as it pertains to climate, environmental, and energy justice. From which, I came to the conclusion that Identity matters. Identity matters when it comes to income, identity matters when it comes to privilege, identity matters when it comes to equity, equality, and the right to information. While at Spark Northwest, through my research project that analyzed the energy burden of residents within a specific county, this was proven through the numbers. Individuals that identified under African American face a larger energy burden than those who identify otherwise.

As the EGA looks to celebrate its 30th anniversary, I believe it should look to the future of its legacy and ask itself "what will we be?" I hope to contribute to the answer that what the EGA will become is an organization that changed the course of history. An organization that made the societal inequalities that are associated with my identity, and that are within the purview of this organization, mandated as priority items to be addressed with swift and strategic action. The potential for future impact is feasible and must be achieved. Why? Because a man who never confused movement with progress once said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

ALEXIS CURETON recently achieved a Master of Public Affairs degree at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. This summer, Alexis will support Spark Northwest's Affordable Clean Energy for All program, researching and communicating the role solar energy can play to reduce the energy burden on low income residents. He is passionate about equity and environment, and has done research, communications and coordination for a range of organizations, including the national solar industry association, SEIA. Alexis, having received his undergraduate degree from Clark Atlanta University, understands the importance of diversity in thought and analysis of diverse communities. With that foundation, he is committed to helping others spark the clean energy future.

EGA at 30

BY AILEEN LEE

Whenever someone asks me to opine on the "state" of the environmental field and environmental philanthropy, I find myself pausing to inhale deeply before answering. I think it's because I resist delivering what's become a stock and uncomfortably comfortable mantra: the field is strong and making important gains on many fronts, and yet the overall trajectory for the environment remains bleak.

And I feel this paradox even more acutely when I think of EGA. On the one hand, I've been energized and enlightened by my engagement with the EGA community. I've seen us make strides in building a movement that is more robust, diverse, equitable, and inclusive. At the same time, I can't help but recall EGA discussions that play out like that loop from the movie Groundhog Day—with scene after scene of funders mourning the latest environmental loss. With righteous anger, we commit to building a field that is more relevant and less siloed; one that takes a systems approach and unlocks true power. But, despite the sincerity with which we make these commitments, the scene seems to recur again and again, as we find ourselves continually revisiting the shortcomings of our collective philanthropy.

Cassandra's Crystal Ball

So, I'm really taking a deep breath as I answer EGA's call to look 30 years into our collective future—when we'll be facing a planet of over 9 billion and, if we fail to act decisively in the intervening decades, the most serious consequences from habitat loss, species extinctions, mounting pollution, rising temperatures, and growing water scarcity. It's a future that we're all laboring diligently to avert, but the underlying forces at work are undeniably daunting. Three big things that will shape the next 30 years:

- Expansion of the middle class. In the next 30 years, the population will grow by ~2 billion, and over 3 billion people are expected to enter the "middle class". And while this represents significant gains in terms of lifting people out of poverty, the impact on the environment could be dramatic. For example, if consumption and production practices remain unchanged, just meeting increased food demand could mean converting ~10-20% of remaining natural habitat for agricultural use.
- Urbanization—By 2050, the population living in cities is expected to double, with most of that occurring in the developing world. This doesn't have to be a negative. Done well, it can increase sustainability and quality of life. However, if this tidal wave of urbanization tracks past patterns of sprawl and resource use, the environmental stress will be severe. The land footprint of cities could nearly double, with accompanying increases in demand for water and energy.
- Shift in the geographic nexus of global influence—The demographic shifts described will also result in shifting power toward new centers in Asia and Africa. Keeping the environmental field relevant will require learning to navigate better in these places, where governance can often be weaker and civil society's capacity lacking.

Room for Pollyanna Too

These big trends make the future look bleak. But, there's cause for optimism too. Three things that give me hope:

- The continued information revolution. The explosion of our capacity to digitize and analyze information has already had a tremendous impact on our ability to create transparency and accountability, and I think we've only begun to scratch the surface. Look at what platforms like Global Forest Watch and Global Fishing Watch are already producing. Then imagine the future with projected advances in remote sensing and machine learning. Real-time monitoring and sophisticated resource management look well within reach.
- Increased capacity for social networking. We've already seen how social media platforms have enabled activists to engage constituencies and mobilize resources at lower cost and on a larger scale than ever before. But, I think the field's experimentations are still in their

infancy, with much greater benefits still waiting to be unlocked.

- Plasticity of newly emerging social norms. Ironically, one of the most hopeful things I've heard about our environmental future was in a seminar geared towards those who want to sell more stuff to a rising middle class. They said of these new potential consumers, "Tastes and habits are not as firmly established as in other societies". For me, this means past does not have to be prologue—there is a real opportunity to do things differently as developing world economies evolve in the coming decades.

Things I'll Be Tracking

I don't pretend to have a map that perfectly navigates these shoals of hope and despair. But, here are some things I'll be tracking with my grantmaking:

- Economy and Business: The fate of the environment is intertwined with the path that development will take in emerging economies. I'll be paying attention to opportunities to shape this path at both the micro and macro levels—influencing the practices of key private sector actors, while also seeking levers to change the "rules of the road" in the broader economy.

- Behavior Change: Business as usual behaviors spell doom for the planet, but fortunately, we still have an opportunity to influence how tastes, habits, and norms evolve. In recent years, behavioral science has blossomed as a field and I'll be supporting experimentation in applying that knowledge to the environment.

- Emerging Technologies: In general, environmentalists have a tricky relationship with technology. Our fear that it may be viewed as a panacea can leave us watching from the side-lines, ill-equipped to engage proactively in the search for solutions. The magnitude of the challenges confronting humanity in the next decades means that others will be pushing the frontiers of innovation (e.g. synthetic biology), whether we choose to engage or not. I'm betting that we can engage responsibly, and to good end.

- China: Our foundation operates in landscapes as disparate as the Amazon and Arctic, but I'm always struck by how the influence of China looms consistently large. And with western powers like the U.S. and U.K. stepping back from global leadership in fits of nationalism, China's role seems only more likely to rise. China hosts the Convention on Biological Diversity COP in 2020—how will their leadership shape the path post-Aichi and how can we engage?

My Birthday Wish for EGA at 60

I imagine that if we looked across other EGA funders' hit lists for the next 30 years, we would get a wide diversity of targets. And I think that's a good thing. As I observed, the EGA community sincerely aspires to build a movement that is more relevant, less siloed, and that takes a true systems approach. But still, my toughest self-critique would be that our community tends towards didacticism, insularity, and reductionism in some harmful ways. We want more diversity, but too often we can behave as if we expect people to meet us where we are, instead of finding ways to meet them where they are. We look to build alliances that expand our appeal, but can fall prey to fits of ideological purity that alienate the uninitiated. And we can be vulnerable to silver-bullet thinking, embracing new approaches as displacing of everything that's come before, rather than as new lenses that can help enrich our collective approach to the system that we're addressing.

But, I have confidence in this community's capacity to get beyond this cycle. And I fully expect that EGA at 60 will have gone through the tough self-examination needed, found new ways of working and learning together collectively, and forged a path toward winning on the environment.

AILEEN LEE is the Chief Program Officer leading the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Environmental Conservation Program, which includes major initiatives focused on the Andes-Amazon biome, North American marine ecosystems, and market-based approaches to advancing sustainability in agricultural and seafood supply chains.

A Quest for Trust

BY VICTORIA RUDDLE
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

As a graduate student pursuing a degree in Marine Biology, it wasn't often that I thought about people and the environment. But this summer I worked with the Ocean Research Conservation Association (ORCA) in Fort Pierce, Florida—an organization dedicated solely to the goal of cleaning up the water in the Indian River Lagoon, what was once North America's most diverse estuary.

Last summer, a harmful algal bloom so thick that it was referred to as "guacamole" spread through the lagoon's waters. The bloom deepened a rift between the public and local government & federal scientists. A year later the ACLU reported that state agencies did not release warnings in a timely manner, and that the methodology used to measure toxicity was "questionable and the results untrustworthy". Included in the report is a story from a visiting scientist who was shocked to find locals swimming and fishing in the waters despite the bloom, and he saw that no signs had been posted warning locals the possible health effects of being near the water. He warned a few men of the dangers of eating the fish they were catching, and was told "but we have to feed our kids".

What this story circles back to, in my opinion, is an issue of trust. The 2016 presidential election raised questions of trust—of the government, of scientists, "ivory towers", and more. I believe that the field of environmental philanthropy is uniquely poised to forge ahead with conservation and environmental justice initiatives at the same time that federal and state scientists face growing distrust and severe budget cuts. My host organization, ORCA, has developed a foundation of trust with the residents on the Indian River Lagoon that is independent of a federal, state, or academic tie. They are simply local people who wanted and needed change in their environment. As environmental funders move forward in a tenuous time for environmentalists, I hope they will focus on funding small grassroots organizations that can form relationships with the public on a foundation of trust—a necessity that, lately, seems to have been laid aside.

VICTORIA RUDDLE is currently an MS student in Marine Biology at the College of Charleston, South Carolina. Originally from upstate New York, she has a BS in Biology from St. Lawrence University. Though her graduate research has focused on the population status of endangered sturgeon in South Carolina, she has developed an interest in marine policy and the intersection of research and conservation. She has spent the summer with the Ocean Research Conservation Association (ORCA) on the Treasure coast in Florida, developing science-based solutions to the environmental issues impacting the Indian River Lagoon. Her fellowship is graciously supported by the Schmidt Family Foundation.

The Next 30 Years

BY DANA BOURLAND

The JPB Foundation is a new member of the Environmental Grantmakers Association. Surrounded by the majesty of the Grand Tetons, the EGA 2016 Fall Retreat was my first time experiencing an EGA gathering. It was challenging; it was inspiring; it was thought provoking; and it was humbling.

In 2047, EGA will be 60. When we reach that milestone, will we be living up to our full potential as an environmental grantmakers association? As a novice on the scene, I grapple with that very question and many others. Does the country need another environmental funder? Does EGA need one more member? How might we add value? Where might we add value? At JPB, we believe that by enriching and supporting the environment we will positively and measurably impact the health and well-being of our human and natural systems. The need to do so will outsize our impact if we do not collaborate and coordinate our work with that of every other member of EGA. As a collective, we have the opportunity in less than three decades to equitably resource an environmental movement that advances our basic human rights and shared freedom to participate fully in society. This is where I see the most opportunity and hope.

We arrive at EGA from different places and for different reasons. I believe however that we share a common goal. I grew up in a home that burned coal to fuel our stove and consequently watched my brother struggle to breathe, as he was the one who collected the coal each day. However, I have also splashed in pristine rivers and have taken shade under the leafy branches of large trees. We know that it is possible to apply the resources of nature in a degenerative or in a regenerative way. A phrase I reference often is I am who I am because of who you are. I take its meaning literally to apply between you and me but also generally to apply between people and the planet. I cannot chose between you and me. We are interconnected. This is the promise of our EGA community that we will undeniably understand that we cannot chose between human made systems and natural ones. Whether we come at this from an energy perspective, or from one of water, air, food, or any other silo our work is connected.

Our success depends on the success of one another. It's not about urban or rural. It's not about people or the planet. It's not about the economy or the environment. These are false choices. EGA provides a framework for us to learn about each other's work and find synergies and intersection. Taking our cue from the natural world, we can balance our many perspectives by moving the entire sector of environmental philanthropy forward in a sustainable and equitable manner. This will not happen if we work alone. If we pit false choices against each other. I look forward to the years ahead as a member of EGA. I have already learned much from other members. I am most looking forward to ensuring that the grantmaking of JPB is strengthening the fabric of a just and equitable environmental movement alongside each of you.

DANA BOURLAND is leading the creation of JPB's environment program with a goal to enable resilient communities. A Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Dana is a graduate of Harvard University's Graduate Program in Real Estate and holds a Master of Planning Degree. She is cited in numerous trade and popular publications for work on the intersection of health, poverty and the environment. Dana enjoys traveling around the world and is an Ironman Finisher.

Strategies for Inclusion

BY PRISCILA PAPIAS
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

As part of my Environmental Fellows Program summer projects, I worked on a storytelling project to capture the stories of individuals that were facing housing issues. Through these stories I came to learn about the communities that make up Boston and their lived experience. One of the most memorable interviews I had was with a young videographer who described their experience being priced out of their family's home. They shared that while housing programs were in place to lessen the impact of displacement, the programs inadvertently created a group of "have and have-nots." There were families that were able to receive housing and then there were others that were not able to receive housing.

Their story highlighted a question that has guided my work throughout the summer: how can we create solutions that were inclusive of all communities. A few weeks before I had the interview with the young videographer, I attended a housing conference, where I was confronted again with the question of how solutions were including, or not, certain communities. On the third day of the conference a community gathered to protest the conference. These individuals were protesting because they feared that housing developments would lead to community displacement and gentrification. I mention the protest because it should raise a red flag and prompt questions regarding what communities are not being included in the conversation around housing. The protest should tell you that there is real fear in communities about losing their home and livelihood. While the housing conference was intended to generate discussion to address the housing pressures, it was not perceived in that way.

While my experience is mostly centered around housing, the question of how to be inclusive of different communities is still applicable to organizations across all fields. As your organization moves forward consider if, and how, the process of making new programmatic developments is creating a system of have or have-nots. If it is, consider when along the process of programmatic development this is happening. Finally, consider what action steps need to be taken in order for inclusionary practices to be sustained over time. Inclusionary programming can be possible if we reexamine our strategies for inclusion.

PRISCILA PAPIAS is originally from Southeast Los Angeles, California. She is completing her Master's at the University of Michigan, where her focus is on conservation ecology. Priscila completed her undergraduate studies in environmental history from UC Berkeley, and she is interested in bilingual environmental education, community development, and urban sustainability. Her current project is developing a climate education course for the Spanish literacy program, En Nuestra Lengua.

Growing Stewards of Tomorrow

BY RANDI FISHER

As EGA reflects on thirty years and looks toward the future, I am inspired by the emerging leaders, young activists, and passionate advocates in this community.

As we learn from each other and from the young people among us, we begin to understand that building a sustainable, healthy future does not merely mean ensuring clean air and water for future generations, it requires that we equip, support, and partner with the next generation of environmental stewards.

At the Pisces Foundation, we believe if we act now and boldly, we can quickly accelerate to a world where people and nature thrive together. We support innovators who know what it takes and are doing what's necessary to have clean and abundant water, a safe climate, and kids with the environmental know-how to create a sustainable world. We recognize that the most innovative, sustainable solutions to these existential challenges will come from the next generation. The legislators, scientists, activists, consumers, and ultimately stewards of tomorrow will make the decisions that determine the future of the places and communities we treasure. How can we, as a community of funders, grow these stewards of tomorrow?

I believe that when kids gain the environmental know-how they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world, we'll see smarter decisions, stronger communities, and daily actions that improve their well-being and our planet. I am grateful for the ways that EGA has pushed environmental philanthropy to look forward. Through its partnership in launching the Blue Sky Funders Forum in 2014, EGA has opened and expanded the conversation about environmental literacy to a wide array of stakeholders.

Blue Sky, a working group of EGA, inspires, deepens, and expands philanthropy to advance opportunities that connect people and nature. Blue Sky will soon enter its fourth year, and I am thrilled with the momentum we have created together to further this mission. Blue Sky has experienced many thrilling successes and opportunities as a network thus far. This past year, Blue Sky, EGA, and partners celebrated the National Park Service Centennial, elevating the conversation among environmental funders beyond preserving wild places to ensuring that all communities have access to the outdoors and environmental learning. As we advance our work at the national level, I was honored to visit the White House in April 2016 with other Blue Sky trustees to meet with First Lady Michelle Obama. Another highlight of the last year was witnessing major wins for people and nature at the state and local levels. With key contributions from Blue Sky funders, we saw voters make Oregon the first state in the nation to dedicate funding to outdoor education this past November. These victories bring me great joy, and also give me hope for the future.

As EGA grows and evolves over the next thirty years, I look forward to more of my colleagues joining me in spreading the word about the best ways to use environmental education to improve and support conservation, education, health and wellness, social justice, and youth development. It is up to us to ensure that these stewards of tomorrow have the opportunities, resources, and knowledge to join us in solving our most pressing environmental challenges and in building a future where people and nature thrive together.

RANDI FISHER is a philanthropist and social entrepreneur focused on the nexus of the environment, health, and sustainability. She is co-founder and trustee of the Pisces Foundation in San Francisco. Randi is involved in the full range of the Foundation's work with an emphasis on environmental education. In addition to her work at the Foundation, Randi serves on the boards of the National Park Foundation, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and Education Outside. She is the founder of the Blue Sky Funders Forum.

Can Urban Sustainability Address Inequality?

BY SINDHU BHARADWAJ
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

My environmental education began long before I fully realized it. Growing up, I frequently moved between Bangalore, India and the suburbs of Chicago and Boston. The years I spent visiting and later, living in India provided an invaluable lesson in inequality and the unearned privileges defining my life. In Bangalore, I saw children my age living under tarps, besides piles of trash. Congestion and poor air quality necessitated wearing a face mask while waiting in untenable traffic every day. Blackouts lasting hours were common and I saw neighbors and relatives struck by incapacitating mosquito-borne illnesses. During my time as an undergraduate at New York University, the inequality embedded in American cities also became impossible to ignore. Witnessing the disparate impacts of Hurricane Sandy along class and racial lines along with the daily juxtaposition of extreme wealth and poverty on the streets, I started drawing parallels between human and environmental well-being in the urban context.

These early experiences proved hugely influential in my approach to environmental work, especially as the field of environmental justice provided a language with which to articulate the ways in which communities' quality of life was contingent on environmental quality. Cities are the sites of stark injustice, environmental and otherwise, as well as models for a more sustainable, equitable future. My work this past summer with MassINC as and the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority through the University of Michigan examines how thoughtful transportation and urban planning policies can generate outcomes that correct for environmentally harmful past practices while strengthening existing communities. The overlaps between urban form, community structure, and sustainability provide an opportunity for shaping creative solutions to the multifaceted problems facing cities and society more broadly. As we think about the future of grantmaking, I urge ongoing consideration of how our environmental efforts can simultaneously address systemic inequities in place-based ways.

SINDHU BHARADWAJ is a second-year MS student at the University of Michigan studying Environmental Justice and Planning. Her work focuses on urban sustainability, transportation policy, and climate adaptation. For her Environmental Fellows Program placement, she spent a summer with MassINC, a Boston-based think tank, researching the potential for transit-oriented development across Massachusetts.

Emerging Leadership: 30 Years of Shared Growth

BY LISSA WIDOFF

The 30th anniversary of EGA's founding comes on the heels of the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation's own celebration of 30 years of identifying and supporting environmental leaders.

I have attended EGA over the years for inspiration that brings hope for the future and to stay abreast of the myriad issues and approaches to solving environmental problems.

The founders and trustees of the Switzer Foundation have always believed that individuals can make a difference and that leadership must evolve with the times we are in. We have seen a progression from an emphasis on environmental science to policy to activism among our 600 Switzer Fellows, whose work and impact extend across the country and the far corners of the globe. We are part of a growing commitment that many organizations are making to ensure that the environmental movement supports a pipeline of leaders from the racial, social and economic backgrounds that represent the country as well as the issues that affect communities at all scales. Our programs identify leaders engaged in academic work, who use their expertise on issues of climate change, renewable energy, environmental health, law and policy, business sustainability and important basic academic research that informs policy and practice. We have learned that leaders have many pathways beyond the academy, from urban neighborhoods to rural farms, and we have an obligation to link our resources with all kinds of leadership to create a better world.

I have been inspired by EGA and our colleagues who step forward into new issues and approaches, demonstrating what is possible for the rest of us. I have treasured the leadership of EGA in bringing our awareness not only to issues of environmental justice and equity, but HOW as foundations we can exercise our privilege to support and build new leadership for the future. Emerging leaders of today are already hard-wired for working at the intersections of race and power, environment and economics, academia and grassroots, science and community. I am glad to know that the evolution of our work has been informed by the leadership of EGA at annual retreats and convenings. May we all continue to stretch out of our comfort zones, work across sectors and offer humble support to new leaders whose pathways and approaches will look different from ours. There are new leaders emerging every day whose vision we can empower and from whom we can learn. I am honored to be on this journey together with you as we build a more equitable and inclusive movement. Our work is far from complete.

LISSA WIDOFF is Executive Director of the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation, an environmental foundation based in Belfast, Maine that supports graduate Fellowships in New England and California and a Leadership Grant Program supporting NGO partnerships with Switzer Fellows to work on critical environmental issues. Lissa began as Executive Director in 1999 and has overseen the growth of the organization in its program development, governance structure engaging family and non-family trustees and financial management.

Building Bridges for Policy Reform

BY VALARAE PARTEE
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

While I had a passion for learning, growing up in a low-income family placed certain restrictions on things I was able to do and learn. This meant my access to good schools and quality resources was nearly non-existent in the small desert town where I was born. Instead of stifling my increasing interest in academics, my mother arranged for me and my siblings to live with my grandparents in Atlanta where I had greater academic opportunities. Though I did not understand my moms' sacrifices as a child, as I got older, I saw how a single positive and selfless act could create a life-altering domino effect. This is the same effect that environmental philanthropy can have but on a much larger scale.

Because of the many people who have invested in my well-being, I have an instinctual desire to help others, give back, impact lives, and pay my gifts forward. I'm blessed to say I am pursuing my PhD in Environmental Engineering where I focus on water resources, agriculture, and climate change. Working on environmental topics that can be publicly disturbing, scientifically challenging, and politically arduous has led me down a path that considers social and environmental injustices that may not be obvious at first glance. Through the Environmental Fellows Program, I worked as a technical advisor at an environmental law firm (Earthjustice) that illuminated how crucial science-based policy reform is for the voices that often go unheard. As a scientist, I can find novel environmental solutions in my laboratory; at a law firm, I can use science to help find legal solutions to environmental problems; but without getting involved in science and community-based policy reform, I'm working backwards on problems that can be addressed or prevented on the front-end.

My ultimate goal is to be a bridge between scientists, policymakers, businesses, and most importantly, communities to inform decisions that improve human and environmental welfare. I think the future of environmental grantmaking should align with similar goals because equitable and informed policy change gets right at the heart of many environmental issues that negatively and disparately impact the most vulnerable groups. With the recent attacks on science, education, and social and environmental justice, it is more important than ever to continue spreading positivity and good works through environmental philanthropy.

VALARAE PARTEE is originally from Atlanta and currently pursuing her PhD in Environmental Engineering with a focus on drinking water, agricultural water quality and management, and climate change. She hopes to be a bridge between the scientific community, policy makers, businesses, and communities. Her goal is to help ensure a world with healthy, equitable, and sustainable ecosystems, economies, and communities.

Better Together: Collective Action Charts a Sustainable Course for Communities

BY KEEFE HARRISON

I am often asked to reflect on the status of recycling in America. Are we really still talking about recycling—isn't that fixed already? Or are Americans too apathetic to make it work? Is corporate America really committed to lasting change?

My initial instinct is to launch into the numbers and data of why we can and should be bullish about recycling—at The Recycling Partnership we know what to do to advance recycling, where to do it, and are attracting key funding partners to make it happen.

But that's just one slice of a broader narrative that includes recycling. The bigger plot line involves holistic sustainability, climate action at the local level, and many partners, which is why joining the EGA this year was so important to our Board and staff. In the face of the U.S. government's retreat from environmental advances, notably the seemingly constant attacks on the U.S. EPA and the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, opportunity still knocks, with even greater urgency to seize it, and often presented in a more collaborative package.

Just like you, we are buoyed each day when we put our funder's investments to work in communities across the U.S.—communities full of dedicated people committed to transformational change. Since 2014, in the face of down commodity markets and shrinking local budgets, The Recycling Partnership has partnered with more than 400 communities to improve their recycling programs, reaching 17 million homes, and avoiding over 164,000 metric tons of CO2 equivalent. Local governments are leveraging our seed grants and educational resources, often coupled with state funding and foundation support, creating broad public-private partnerships.

Take Emmet County, Michigan for example. Originally submitting a proposal to launch cart-based collection in only two of their five communities, we challenged them to fundraise from foundations and local companies that use recycled materials in order to reach the whole population. The County received an additional grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and in short order lined up 16 more funding sources. The end result? Carts were distributed to 7,000 families in 2016. Leveraged change through collaboration.

On a larger scale, our partners in Chicago, Denver and Atlanta understand that recycling offers private and public partners a direct path to healthier communities, more jobs and climate action. While recycling feels universal, in truth America is only capturing half of what we could, leaving more than 22M tons of recyclables in the landfill. That's not only a $1.8B economic loss, it's the equivalent of keeping 50.5M cars on the road in terms of GHGs. These types of innovative partnerships are game changers in communities that would otherwise not be able to advance their programs alone, or would do so at a much greater cost to taxpayers.

As a newcomer to the EGA, we look forward to discovering innovative ways to partner with our fellow environmental organizations—to serve that all important coordinating, grantmaking, bridge-building and problem solving role. When communities think about zero waste goals or climate action plans, they create an umbrella of action that includes a myriad of on the ground interventions, of which recycling is one. The more frequently air, water, land, energy and materials management focused environmental organizations partner with each other and communities, the greater the opportunity to leverage impact alongside dollars. Yes, there is much work to be done but it needn't be done alone. We are better together.

KEEFE HARRISON is the CEO of The Recycling Partnership, a national nonprofit transforming recycling in towns across America. A 19-year veteran of the waste reduction and recycling field, her experience includes firms, governments, and organizations such as Booz Allen Hamilton, The North Carolina Department of Environment, and The Association of Plastics Recyclers. Prior to her work in recycling, Keefe researched green sea turtle populations in Tortuguero, Costa Rica, studied reindeer husbandry in Finland, worked on a sustainable forestry chainsaw crew in the mountains of North Carolina. An active national speaker and published author on recycling and environmental issues, Keefe lives with her husband, two children, and their backyard hens in Walpole, New Hampshire.

Clean Electricity is a Human Right

BY SOLI SHIN
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

I want to fight climate change because of my faith. If the same passage in Genesis about mankind's dominion over earth can be used to ravage its natural resources, I want to use it to defend stewardship. No other contributor impacts global warming more than the greenhouse gas emissions of the electric power sector. Being the impatient person that I am, I have devoted my graduate education to fixing the energy sector.

I want to make renewable energy affordable for everyone. Not only for corporate purchasers, or for homeowners who have install a solar PV system on their roofs, but for entire communities. Those communities that face the hazardous impacts of coal ash from generation plants, those communities that still use kerosene to warm their homes. There's nothing wrong with Amazon buying a wind farm, or Tesla's solar roof, and they have their place in the renewable energy story. But for utilities to continue providing cheap electrical power and heating, we need to address the gaps of the current renewable energy landscape.

My work this summer at the Environmental Defense Fund has been enlightening. My biggest joy was to delve deep into the policies and proposed framework of New York state's Reforming the Energy Vision (REV). This analysis helped me think creatively about the type of solutions that would be available to all residents, including low- and moderate-income consumers. One of the most exciting pushes that EDF is involved in are the continuing conversations in the policy space about Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). While we are still a few steps away from making these feasible nationwide, it is clear that there are untapped benefits when communities can pool together and leverage purchasing power to access the clean, renewable energy that had only been available to their richer neighbors.

Bridging the gap between those with the economic freedom to demand renewable power and those who do not, is my mission in the field of energy. By allowing a market framework where households can aggregate their purchasing power and negotiate a cheaper cents-per-kilowatt (kWh) rate, policymakers are coming closer to addressing the gap. In the next 30 years, I hope that EGA members will focus not solely on putting more renewable energy onto the grid by supporting project development, but to ensure that this growth in the renewables market is met with levers like CCA and similar policies that ensure that the growth is not lopsided.

SOLI SHIN is a first year, Masters in Environmental Management student at Duke's Nicholas School. She is interested in a career tackling energy problems. She believes that the answer to climate change lies within an interdisciplinary model that incorporates quantitative methods and analysis through language, visuals, and data.

Culture, Food and Environment

BY GABRIEL JONES
EGA STAFF, 2016 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

As I think about the future of environmental giving, I can't help but reflect on the past. Being a product of two different cultures has always shaped how I view the environment and how I think about the way that my ancestors established their relationships with nature. In Mesoamerica, the Mexica (or Aztec) cultivated crops through a network of artificial islands, known as chinampas. A few centuries later, enslaved West Africans grew rice on plantations in the sweltering heat of South Carolina. I bring up these histories to not only demonstrate how food serves as a connection between culture and the environment, but to also shed light on my bi-racial identity as it informs both my work and my resolve to push for a more just and sustainable food system.

During my time in grad school, I became involved in a project that looked at food access and insecurity around the State of Michigan. Witnessing how laws and policies can uplift or block communities from achieving food justice and food sovereignty put a lot of things in context for me. More importantly, it reminded me that I must always remain connected to my history when advocating for a better food system in Black and Brown communities.

What does the future hold for environmental grantmaking? To me, it's not so much a question about which specific issues are more relevant, but rather about the lens through which we view issues in the present. If my experiences have taught me anything, it's that the stronger the connection to your cultural roots, the stronger your resilience and determination to address injustices in your community. We miss out on opportunities if we continue to view things like food insecurity and limited food access in low-income communities of color as simply a matter of not having enough community gardens or supermarkets. It is imperative that funders prioritize those organizations and collectives that are reconnecting cultural ties to food and agriculture in communities while also seeking deep transformation in our current food system. As D-Town Farms in Detroit says– you can't have 'agriculture' without 'culture'.

GABRIEL JONES is a Program Coordinator with EGA in New York, where he assists with implementing EGA's DEI initiatives and coordinating on signature events. As a 2016 Environmental Fellow, he worked for the University of Michigan's Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program to lead DEI seminars for undergraduates and assist with program operations. He has both worked for and participated in various initiatives and programs to increase access to graduate school for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

How to Get Along with "Others"

BY MARIE SCHAEFER
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

"In order to plant your next row of corn, you must look back to see where you have already been." I still remember these works from my friend, a Hopi farmer, as we planted corn on a hot day on the Hopi reservation. In order for the Environmental Grantmakers Association to make the most impact and be relevant 30 years from now we must learn the lessons from its past and continue the hard but essential work of getting a diverse set of voices in positions of power in the philanthropy world. I'm proud to be a part of these efforts in the form of the Environmental Fellows program. However, it's not enough just to get diverse voices in those positions but then silence them. As a result, to enact true change the structures and dynamics of what is considered relevant data for philanthropy decisions should be examined. The knowledge systems of those most affected by the issues that environmental philanthropy organizations work on, such as climate change, should also be at the table in an equal position.

As an Anishinaabekwe (Anishinaabe woman) I have been taught by my elders that my responsibilities are to nibi or water and to be a "keeper of the fire" or the keeper of the culture. I feel these responsibilities and duties deeply and it has shaped my career goals by focusing me on developing a career in which I use indigenous knowledge or the strengths of my Indigenous culture along with scientific knowledge to help revitalize Anishinaabe and other communities.

EGA and the environmental philanthropy community have a great opportunity in the next 30 years to work with Indigenous scholars and other underrepresented communities to see how Indigenous knowledges and other knowledges, when used in a reciprocal relationship, with scientific knowledge can be used to work on everything from planning for climate change and restoring ecosystems to creating sustainable communities. We must acknowledge the past and current trauma of colonialism and patriarchy however it is when we look beyond our differences to how we can work together in non-exploitive ways that true change can occur.

MARIE SCHAEFER is a PhD student in Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. She received her MA in Applied Anthropology from Northern Arizona University and is an Anishinaabekwe (Odawa) from Michigan. Marie has had the honor of working with Tribes across the United States. Her work focuses on indigenous knowledges revitalization especially manoomin (wild rice) revitalization as well as creating collaborations that braid indigenous knowledges and scientific knowledge using community-based participatory approaches in order to create sustainable futures for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Making Connections: Partners, Issues, Solutions, and Impacts

BY ANISA KAMADOLI COSTA

Since my first days at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund through my current role at The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, I have had the opportunity to be a part of the EGA community.

Over the years, I have been honored to both co-chair the Program Committee and serve as a co-chair of the Board of Directors. During this time, the thing that has impressed me the most has been EGA's deep focus on collaboration. This is a community of people who understand that partnerships lead to exponential progress. We know that by sharing ideas, learning from each other, and partnering on new solutions, we can go further, faster.

The sheer magnitude of today's environmental challenges requires collaboration. No one group alone can protect our oceans, stabilize our climate, conserve our wild places, revitalize our urban parks, or save our threatened species. The true "superpower" in environmental work is the ability to partner—to pool funds, join up resources, align strategies, and raise our voices together.

It's not only the magnitude but also the nature of environmental challenges that necessitate collaboration. As members of EGA well know, environmental issues are deeply interconnected. Consider the relationship between oceans and the climate: Healthy, living oceans help absorb carbon dioxide and reduce the impacts of climate change. But climate change also threatens oceans. It has contributed to rising sea levels, warmer water temperatures, and ocean acidification, leading to the loss of marine life, decreased catches for fisheries, and a downturn in economic opportunity.

At The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, one of the reasons we focus on the ocean is because of its inextricable link to climate change and the health of the planet as a whole." Within oceans, we emphasize the protection of coral, which is a cornerstone species for healthy marine ecosystems. In the underwater world, coral reefs function like cities, providing homes, food, and lanes of transportation for a teeming diversity of marine communities. But these reefs are in grave danger from climate change: A recent report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) warns that U.S. coral reefs are on course to disappear within the next 20 or 30 years. Just imagine if that prediction were made for America's cities.

As environmental funders, we understand the urgency of these challenges. We also understand that more than one solution is required. Not only do we need research and education, we need investments in restoration, conservation, community engagement, and policymaking. This underscores the third aspect of environmental issues that requires collaboration: In addition to the magnitude and interconnected nature of the issues, environmental progress necessitates that we work together on multiple solutions.

When Tiffany & Co. established The Tiffany & Co. Foundation in 2000, we decided to focus on preserving coral ecosystems for future generations. We quickly learned that our task is about more than protection. It is also about research, education, and policymaking.

50 Reefs, an organization we support in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies and Paul G. Allen Philanthropies, is identifying the 50 reefs least vulnerable to climate change and best placed to seed the future of reefs. This group is focused on vital scientific research that will inform conservation efforts, coupled with broader communications about the threat to reefs. Other groups we support, such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), focus on coral and marine conservation. We recently supported WCS's work to expand the world's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Research and conservation are critical, but they must be complemented by citizen education and engagement. Most people don't spend much time underwater. In the United States, active divers make up just 1.1 percent of the population. Those of us who experience coral firsthand know of its magic, but how do we translate that to inspire advocacy among people above water? As grantmakers, we must invest in efforts to raise awareness, educate people, and inspire action from communities who are affected by issues like ocean health, even if they are not yet experiencing the direct impacts.

That's why The Tiffany & Co. Foundation supported Conservation International's unique virtual reality film, *Valen's Reef*, which gives viewers an immersive, almost real-life experience in one of the world's most biologically diverse reefs. It's also why we supported the new film *Chasing Coral*, an emotional documentary about the world's dying reefs and the team behind the 50 Reefs effort.

There is one final reason we must act together on environmental issues, and that's impact. Challenges like climate change affect us all, creating impacts that extend from our economy, to our communities, to our natural resources, to public health. These threats require urgent action—and massive collaboration.

For more than 30 years, EGA has gotten it right: To address the magnitude of the problems, to solve the root cause of interconnected issues, to create the multitude of solutions we need, and to address the impacts that affect us all, we must work together. EGA fills a critical role by providing a forum for this collaboration. Looking back, I am so proud of all that this group has accomplished. Looking forward, I am full of hope for the future this collaboration will create.

ANISA KAMADOLI COSTA is a sustainability executive, philanthropy expert and coalition-builder. She is the Chairman and President of The Tiffany & Co. Foundation and Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) at Tiffany & Co., holding two distinct yet synergistic roles that embody Tiffany's longstanding commitment to environmental and social responsibility. As CSO, Anisa directs Tiffany's global sustainability agenda, improving global corporate standards, minimizing the company's environmental impact and driving partnerships across the for-profit and non-profit sectors.

Moving the Needle on Environmental Conservation

BY RACHEL SMITH
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

I started this summer's fellowship program with an interest in exploring the wide range of environmental justice issues impacting Native peoples within the United States and Canada. I am Sicangu Lakota and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. My mom was Native, my dad white. For the past 12 years, I have dedicated my career to working in higher education, coordinating programs to support to American Indian and Alaska Native students earning degrees in natural resources sciences. Through my M.S. in Forestry research from the University of Montana, I had the opportunity to collaborate with a local Tribal Forestry office to provide data to meet tribal forest management goals.

I have great respect for tribal communities' ability to manage land and marine resources on shoe-string budgets and with limited staff. Tribal communities have strong, unique connections to their lands—these lands are inextricable from their identity. This connection makes tribal communities a natural pick to serve as stewards of their lands; but as a result of anti-indigenous politics and policies, Western approaches to conservation, and a general lack of funding and support, tribes are often not the ones making decisions on their own lands.

Through my EFP summer fellowship with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, I had the amazing opportunity to visit several First Nations communities in British Columbia to see firsthand how these Nations are recapturing their rights to manage and steward their traditional territories. A young generation of First Nation environmental leaders are overseeing stewardship programs (such as the Supporting Emerging Aboriginal Stewards, or SEAS, and Guardian Watchman) that not only protect their land and sea resources, but also provide mechanisms for younger generations to reconnect with their traditional culture, language and stories. It was clear that land/sea stewardship is actually an effective vehicle for cultural revitalization and an expression of self-determination.

Many of the last pristine and biologically diverse areas are located within indigenous lands. To conserve these areas into the future, shifting philanthropic support to projects focused on indigenous self-determination and the durability of cultural identity will support conservation and justice.

RACHEL SMITH recently completed her M.S. in Forestry from The University of Montana, where her research focused on developing geospatial tools to assist tribal land managers in meeting their conservation goals. Rachel is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. She is interested in learning how non-profits can support tribal communities to build capacity, and develop movements, focused on the protection and conservation of land, water, air, community health and cultural identity. She enjoys exploring hot springs, hiking with her family, and traveling.

Connect the Dots

BY FLORENCE MILLER

I find it hard to believe that we are living in anything but a historical moment. For the sake of sleeping through the night I try to play down the significance of all that is unfolding around us, as so many seemingly disparate but deeply intertwined issues seem to reach boiling points together.

But I can't help but think we will look back on now as the time when we either did, or didn't, grasp the nettle and sort ourselves out.

Living in the UK now, but having spent half my life in the US, carrying both passports and being married to an American, I find myself torn daily—sometimes hourly—between news stories from both countries. Charlottesville. Grenfell Tower. Inequality, unbelievable wealth, police shootings, systemic racism, lead-poisoned water, species loss, climate change, air pollution, consumption, addiction, depression, sprawl, obesity, the epidemic of unbridled vanity. (Actually, no recent news items spring to mind on that last point, but I'm starting a one-woman crusade against it. Right now.)

And, of course—for you can only go so long in a conversation without bringing either up, at least in my world—Trump, Brexit.

Though in both cases I thought for a happy 24 hours before they happened that they wouldn't, I see now that both Trump's win and the outcome of the EU referendum were not hard to predict in a world with the aforementioned litany of afflictions. Somehow I'd always assumed that, when widespread expressions of deep dissatisfaction with the status quo finally came, they would chime with me politically. Silly me.

Meanwhile, the world continues to unravel, and the vast majority of funding for environmental issues continues to fund the symptoms of environmental degradation: buying up land, stemming species loss, protecting marine areas.

I don't want to see any of this vital work stopped, but frankly I'm not sure how much we can afford to specialise any more. If we are to see long-term, large-scale change, we must do a much better job addressing the drivers, the root causes, of our woes, not just the symptoms. And getting to the root causes will often mean moving beyond our narrow definitions of the problems we think we are trying to address.

One of the principles of permaculture is that the edge between two environments is the most diverse place in a system, and one where energy and materials accumulate or are transformed. In many, if not most cases, I think that addressing root causes will require funding at the intersections of issues: I think we will see the most progress working at the places where the environment, human rights, social justice, health, even the arts meet. If we're not solving multiple problems at once, we're probably creating new ones. (And even if we are solving multiple problems at once, we're probably creating new ones—we are not, after all, omniscient—but, and without wishing to sound flip, at least we've addressed several other problems on the way.)

I'm not the first person to make this argument, and I don't think any of this is easy. It's hard enough solving one problem at a time. And I don't claim to have any answers myself, but that's part of the point. Meaningfully addressing the root causes of our collective problems will require a coming together of people very different from each other, with different understandings of different problems that stem from the same, or similar, roots. To me, making sure this can happen is one of the most important jobs that funders can undertake. Funders should not just be funders, but dot-joiners, too.

Earlier this year my organisation, the Environmental Funders Network—a smaller version of the EGA based in the UK—surveyed the leaders of over 90 environmental organisations. We asked them myriad questions about how the movement might be strengthened significantly and what funders can do to help.

One thing we heard from many respondents was simple. Funders often have an overview of the many players working on different issues that the NGOs themselves simply don't

have. It's time-intensive and expensive to get to know all the other actors in a system. Funders have the significant advantage of being able to take the time to map out those key players. I'm sure that, as here in the UK, there are excellent examples of US environmental funders bringing their grantees and others together, forging connections. But there is surely scope for more. As one chief executive said in our survey, "Funders have a huge opportunity to bring projects and organisations from their different funding streams together to foster greater collaboration and shared learning, and to broker future partnerships." Another asked funders, quite simply, to "Please join environment, health, social justice and animal welfare up more."

We held a workshop for funders earlier this year with two excellent facilitators, Linda Mitchell and Jen Morgan, focused on the "Art of Participatory Leadership". The workshop focused on skills and techniques funders can use to bring their grantees and networks together in a way that helps them develop meaningful relationships and come to a shared understanding of both the issues they are facing and what needs to be done to address them. What struck me most was that the workshop felt culturally very different from my experience of most workshops. It was structured but spacious, with ample opportunities to learn from each other, feeling around in the dark for connections, without particular goals in sight. I found it quite uncomfortable at times. I always want to be leaping straight to solutions.

But joint approaches will not lead to any quick solutions—or, indeed quick wins. They will take a good deal of time, and that is hard in an atmosphere where everything feels urgent, especially for NGOs strapped for cash. Funders are uniquely positioned to create the spaces and pay for the time needed for diverse groups to come together, connect the dots between the many problems raining down on us right now, and work backwards to their root causes.

FLORENCE MILLER is the Director of the UK-based Environmental Funders Network. Prior to this she ran the TogetherGreen Innovation Grants program at National Audubon Society, was Education Director at the Center for Whole Communities in Vermont and worked in the education department (while they still had one!) at WWF in Washington, D.C. She and her family live in a village in the Chilterns in England.

Coalition Building for Environmental Justice

BY TIANNA BRUNO
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

When I consider the challenges facing this nation, particularly environmental justice communities, I get rather overwhelmed. Then I settle on one concept: intersectionality. The idea of intersectionality acknowledges the many identities and forms of oppression we as humans exist in. Environmental justice is inherently intersectional in that these communities *because* of their histories and present marginal position in political spaces face environmental burdens along with other struggles. In other words, because of one form of oppression, be it race, immigration status, income or all of these at the same time, these communities also deal with environmental inequality. The environmental sector has the potential to incorporate this idea of intersectionality and play a role in pushing for a clean environment and equality. I doubt one will come without the other.

My summer placement sparked a new passion for me on this topic. The Environmental Fellows Program placed me with the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment. This organization focuses on environmental justice advocacy in the San Joaquin Valley in California. The communities with whom we work not only have the concern of living in one of the most polluted areas in the country, but also the recent anti-immigrant rhetoric has refocused an already existing target on these communities. I rode along with staff to many events where I witnessed various local environmental organizations show up not only to push for better air quality or pesticide regulation, but also when they showed up in solidarity and support for immigrants.

Environmental funders have the opportunity to play a role in pushing against attacks on the environment and the human beings that exist in those environments. Supporting projects that take an intersectional approach and building coalitions where communities are the focus have the potential to help the environment and humanity. Being allies and acknowledging the intersecting struggles of these communities is important and will continue to be important if we want equality and justice in the United States and more broadly. The potential future of environmental philanthropy with the consideration of the intersecting struggles of communities give me hope that there may not only be a clean environmental one day for future generations, but also an equal and just society.

TIANNA BRUNO is a Ph.D. student in Geography at the University of Oregon from Houston, Texas. Her research interests include environmental justice and critical race studies. Particularly, she hopes to examine state-society relations and how the state engages in activities regarding the uneven distribution of environmental burdens and benefits in the urban and peri-urban settings with the use of mixed-methods. Other than her research, she really enjoys being an environmental educator.


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Supporting Women and Climate Justice

BY FRANCES ROBERTS-GREGORY
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

My name is Frances and I am a Black woman with indigenous heritage. I am also a social scientist studying Black and Indigenous women's climate justice activism. My academic interests stem from my experience residing within and visiting communities in the United States targeted for toxic contamination. After working as an undergraduate intern with Louisiana coastal communities combating sea level rise, oil pollution and frequent storms and associated flooding, I decided to devote my career as a feminist environmentalist to empowering marginalized voices. Through my studies and conversations at the graduate level, however, I've learned that some environmental researchers spend more time discussing the vulnerability of marginalized communities as opposed to their resilience and problem solving capacities. If Black and Indigenous women are amongst the most vulnerable populations, why aren't their voices and leadership within the climate movement centered in the media?

I can only gather that some institutions and organizations rather perpetuate a disempowering narrative of women's victimhood as opposed to uplift a narrative of women's creativity, competence, strategy and adaptability. It is increasingly important to me then that frontline environmental justice communities receive the financial support they need to challenge these problematic narratives, democratize environmental decision-making and influence climate adaptation policy.

My time spent as an Environmental Fellow with the Environmental Grantmakers Association has similarly strengthened my resolve to promote collaboration and networking amongst climate justice organizations led by women of color and facilitate their access to grants and other funding. Future grantmaking and networks must prioritize people of color, indigenous communities, youth, and women to make sure these populations are given the resources and media attention they deserve to continue to lead the People's Climate Movement. Our future as a global community depends upon their empowerment because they are the ones devising strategies to survive the most pressing challenges facing us as a nation and world. These challenges include displacement and environmental migration, political disenfranchisement, othering, alternative facts, gender based violence and infantilization that perpetuates the status quo of injustice. I ultimately believe we need everyone's input and knowledge to protect life in all its beautiful varieties. Grantmakers must play their role by helping to fund climate justice.

FRANCES ROBERTS-GREGORY is a PhD Candidate in Environmental Science, Policy and Management at the University of California, Berkeley. She served as a 2017 Environmental Fellow with the Environmental Grantmakers Association. Frances is also a Ford Fellow, NSF GRFP Fellow, Gates Millennium Scholar, Significant Opportunities in Atmospheric Research and Science (SOARS) alum and MS PHD alum. Her other interests include feminist political ecology, ethnobotany, community geography, ecowomanism and vegetarianism.

Working Both Sides for a Healthier Planet

BY ALISON CARLSON AND SHELLEY HEARNE

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."
—Abraham Lincoln

Over 150 years later, his words are still a salve in times of political turmoil. President Lincoln knew that when faced with obstacles, those who are committed to change must be ready to envision and drive toward a better future. At the Forsythia Foundation, which is dedicated to making our planet and the people who live on it healthier by eliminating toxics from our daily lives, we take Lincoln's words to heart every day.

To create the future we want—and need—we all must get creative. Our starting point is to help prevent people from developing environment-related illnesses, so that we might keep them out of our costly health care system and enable them to lead healthy and productive lives. To be sure, we must dig deep and defend the big policy wins of the past decade, such as the reform of the Toxics Substances Control Act. It's just not enough.

But the problem isn't just rooted in today's political climate. Regardless of political dynamic, no sector—research, business, government, or nonprofit—has sufficiently found or implemented solutions for the dangerous chemicals in the water we drink, the food we eat, and the products we use. As a society, we need to harness the remarkable power of commerce to problem-solve and create incentives for a healthier economy. To rid the most toxic substances from commerce, we must tackle the status quo. Unfortunately, most businesses do not pay sufficient attention to their toxic impacts. To do this, we have to tackle both sides of the problem: the supply and the demand.

When it comes to market demand, things are looking up. The field has flourished over the past few years as advocacy organizations and consumers got creative. Just look at the Mind the Store campaign, through which many local and national groups are driving major retailers like Walmart and Target to improve their chemical purchasing practices.

In contrast, the supply side of the equation has been slower to catch up. Without viable, safer alternatives, we will continue to step into the traps of regrettable substitutions—the act of replacing a known toxic chemical with a similar substitute that is equally toxic, instead of inventing something new. We must help scale up green chemistry solutions, also known as "benign by design" solutions, or simply as "safer alternatives." At Forsythia, we have been investing in business collaborations like Clean Production Action's BizNGO and the Green Chemistry & Commerce Council to connect green chemistry innovators with business leaders.

But to accelerate the supply side, we have to harness the most powerful levers: investment dollars that can nurture the next generation of ideas and businesses that will fuel safer alternatives. We are helping to drive investment capital through the founding of Safer Made, an impact-driven venture capital fund that invests in high-potential companies and technologies that reduce people's exposure to toxic chemicals. Safer Made aims to make regrettable substitutions a thing of the past, and it's a key ingredient in our work to create the future in which we want to live.

The Safer Made approach offers a significant financial return opportunity to investors and serves as a much-needed new frontier in the pro-health battle against toxic chemicals, supply chains, products, and processes. Because green chemistry principles also promote the reduction of waste, energy, and petrochemicals, investing in benign-by-design innovation protects our water, soil, food, air, and climate, as well as our health.

It's exciting to think of the areas of our materials

economy in which Safer Made can focus its resources. There are compelling market- and impact-related arguments in favor of focusing on safer stain- and water-repellent plastics, building materials, and flame retardants, to name just a few of the pipeline possibilities.

As mission-driven investors, this is our opportunity to be a catalytic force, to prove you can make money supplying companies and consumers with truly safer products that protect both humans and the planet. Visionary individuals, foundations, and corporations, such as the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and Target Corporation, have joined us as anchor investors in Safer Made who see the win-win in supporting the next generation of safer commercial ventures.

We are a nation born out of challenge. When faced with vexing or entrenched obstacles, we innovate. When the federal government becomes a roadblock, we create new pathways and solutions. We are seeing that happen within the environmental health field, which has been finding ways to work with corporate investors and community leaders alike, because we all win with a healthier economy.

ALISON CARLSON is the President of Forsythia Foundation, committed to scaling green chemistry solutions to environmental health problems, including as anchor investor in Safer Made, the venture fund. She previously co-founded Passport Foundation; co-launched UCSF's Program on Reproductive Health and Environment; assistant directed Stanford Graduate School of Business' social entrepreneurship program; and spent 16 years as a sports coach, commentator, promoter, and advocate. She co-founded the International Work Group on Gender Verification in Sports, and co-created and served as contributor for Public Radio's first full sports program.

SHELLEY HEARNE, Forsythia Foundation's executive director, has spent over three decades as a changemaker bent on boosting the health, safety, and sustainability of our planet and the people on it. She leads CityHealth.org, which catalyzes leaders to enact evidence-based policy solutions that will help millions of people live longer, better lives in vibrant, prosperous communities. Dr. Hearne was the founding executive director of Trust for America's Health and former managing director of the Pew Health Group.

Environmental Grantmaking for Social Change

BY KEMET AZUBUIKE
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Thinking about environmental giving makes me reflect on why philanthropy is needed. Gaps in earnings between America's most affluent and the rest of the country continue to grow year after year. Currently, the median income for the bottom 90% hovers at $34k while the top 1% averages $1.3M. More people are poor and impoverished than not, and this number will only steadily increase. As capitalism continues to permanently displace workers through the growing adoption of automation and labor-replacing robots, the way people obtain the resources to survive will drastically change. With no work, these populations can no longer purchase food for sustaining themselves, nor pay to live. This societal change is on the cusp of disrupting the entire social order of this country.

The social contract of society has eroded leaving working-class populations suffering, and the demands on giving will increase as well. The power afforded to environmental grantmakers will increase as well. To be best suited for this environment, recognition of what needs to happen is critical. There will be a lessened dependency on consumerism and the increased need for people to become producers. Chiefly, the determinants of whether a community thrives or dies now becomes contingent on securing resources and organizing their distribution to its population in an equitable manner. For this reason, the relationship of individuals to their environment will change; no longer a relationship of pure extraction, but one of preservation. Grantmaking has to reflect this change.

The future of environmental grantmaking can have a definitive influence on assisting this transition, particularly in vulnerable communities. The traditional model of funding organizations that have a minimal stake in these resource-deficient communities has to change. No longer can the needs of these communities be ascribed to them. Granting organizations like Ecologic Outreach, a minority-founded team in Chicago, working with southside high schoolers, training them to become urban farmers, should be the types of organizations grantmaking institutions are funding. If not and business goes on per usual, the likelihood of favorable outcomes will lessen and will significantly increase chances of radical reforms adverse to the interests of established institutions.

KEMET AZUBUIKE is from Dayton, Ohio and is a graduate student at Howard University studying environmental sociology. Kemet enjoys reading, helping organize communities, mentoring, meeting new people, and playing a good game of basketball. Kemet plans to use this fellowship experience to aid in his understanding of the socioeconomic effects of renewable energies on low-income communities.

Fully Embracing Our Common Future

A Pathway Toward a More Inclusive and Effective Environmental Movement for the 21st Century

BY ARTURO GARCIA-COSTAS

It was at a poetry reading I helped organize in Paris thirty years ago that I first heard the term "sustainable development."

At the time, I was backpacking through Europe and, together with a handful of other pseudo-Bohemians, was literally sleeping on the second floor of the Left Bank's famous Shakespeare and Company bookstore. After polishing off a bottle of wine with a brilliant young Cameroonian with a graduate fellowship to study at the Sorbonne, we began discussing the future of sub-Saharan Africa. During our far-reaching dialogue, he introduced me to the World Commission on Environment and Development, which would release its ground-breaking report "Our Common Future" the following December. In many ways, that conversation changed my life. I found his passion, idealism, and knowledge truly inspiring. So when I left my life as a starving artist in New York City behind and returned to school, I decided to focus my studies on international development and the environment. The rest, as they say, is history.

I share this anecdote to highlight one of the fundamental benefits organizations such as the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) provide. At its core, EGA is all about creating opportunities for exactly the kind of consequential conversation I had with that young man from Cameroon three decades ago. Whether those exchanges occur on a sunrise birding hike or at a reception in a memorable locale or around the table during a meal, they are one of the things I have come to cherish about attending these events. That Paris encounter also serves to illustrate the value of EGA's new Environmental Fellowship program. By helping to create a pipeline of accomplished graduate students—most of them of color—that are passionate about protecting the environment and public health, we can help to address the modern environmental movement's troubling lack of diversity, a stubborn problem harkening back to the first Earth Day in 1970.

Currently, people of color represent more than a third of the U.S. population, but by 2050, they are projected to represent more than 50 percent of the population, making us a minority-majority nation. People of color already constitute a majority of the population in California, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Texas. The political and social implications of an increasingly diverse population and nation are significant. Any political movement that fails to adapt to these demographic shifts risks going into decline. As Dr. Dorceta Taylor and the Raben Group made clear, when they presented on the state of diversity in the environmental movement during a special plenary session at EGA's 2014 fall retreat, government agencies, foundations, and mainstream environmental groups have been less than successful at engaging with people of color and leveraging their substantial support and talent.

As EGA reaches this milestone, the modern environmental movement broadly, and environmental funders in particular, should reflect on how we have gotten here after more than 45 years of financing environmental conservation and advocacy. Why do we continue to struggle with incorporating diversity, inclusion, and equity considerations effectively into our grantmaking? While climate change and environmental degradation affects us all, some in our society are much less able to deal with the negative impacts than others. For example, the poor, the infirm, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to temperature extremes and violent storms. Low-income communities of color often bear the brunt of our civilization's legacy of pollution: from the noxious facilities in their neighborhoods to lead in their drinking water. They are on the "frontlines" of these growing environmental challenges.

ARTURO GARCIA-COSTAS manages the New York Community Trust's National and International Environment and New York City Environment programs. Before joining the Trust, he oversaw New York State's environmental justice grant program. Arturo also ran a United Nations Development Programme initiative focused on implementing the Rio Conventions, and worked with a Clinton appointee at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He earned a B.A. from the City University of New York, and a J.D. from Stanford Law School.

Making America Great

BY CHERYL BENNETT
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Words matter. Words are duplicitous by nature, depending on context, and yet they are all that we have. However, words mean very little if you are not heard. They mean even less if you are not even part of the conversation. Words mean nothing if not backed by action. Yet words mean a lot if it is rooted in colonialist ways not unlike environmentalism, preservation or conservation, freedom, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Why does this matter? As change agents, we have to change our thinking regarding nature and environmentalism. We need to view humans as part of nature and our habitats as a significant element of ecosystems. Ecosystems are the foundations of the biosphere and they determine the health of the entire earth system; therefore, urban areas should be similarly regarded as pristine areas.

Further, we need to understand that there can be no concern for the environment without concern for the people living in it. Too often environmental conversations are scrubbed of the issue of race, maybe it is too complex or perhaps too uncomfortable. However, discomfort does not trump mortality. People are dying today from centuries old power structures as is evident of recent clashes in Charlottesville. The current administration has served to stir up simmering sentiments that have not been addressed truthfully on a national scale.

Why does that matter? My placement was no different from others in that a need was identified as was its solution and subsequent value in restoring it. Philanthropy provided the necessary funding to abate some of these "environmental" issues. That same focus is needed to address the systemic relations of multicellular organisms to one another in the North America region.

We are currently living in a time of great upheaval; society overall is not just accepting the status quo of white supremacy and imperialism as it once did. Environmental funders need not be reactionary and try to smooth things over, rather they should help to build something new to make America really great. Allyship is needed more than ever to meet the challenges facing us as a nation and the world at large.

CHERYL BENNETT is currently in her second year of the Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management master's program at The New School.

Environmental Philanthropy Ain't What it Used to Be (And That's Mostly a Good Thing)

BY JONATHAN A. SCOTT

I attended my first EGA retreat as a "party crasher" many years ago, at an elite hotel in New Hampshire's White Mountains. At the entrance to the hotel drive, I found faux protesters representing the "Wise Use" movement's industry-spawned propaganda that enviros were after our jobs and our liberty, and liberal eco-foundations were conspiring with far-left tree-huggers to make it all happen.

Inside, I found what seemed to me to be a staid gathering of mostly older white men, many in the blazer and slacks attire they'd worn since prep school. It was hard to make connections, and everyone there seemed to know everyone else. I was relatively new to environmental philanthropy (getting ready to take over leadership of our mostly-dormant family foundation) and frankly intimidated by this elite club I was hoping to join.

Fast forward a decade and a half. Perhaps the observation that, for newcomers, EGA retreats are like the reunion for a college you never attended, still rings true. But to me the organization and its members seem much more welcoming.

I've made it into the "white guy over fifty" category and am delighted to find myself in the minority, or close to it. So many more women leaders, youth, and people of color are stepping up, and EGA is much the better for it. This has been a long time coming, and we still have a ways to go, but these changes make me hopeful for the future of environmental philanthropy and the movements we support.

Thanks to the persistent leadership of early champions like the Noyes Foundation and the energy of the Divest-Invest movement spearheaded by EGA members, and the work of Confluence Philanthropy launched by former EGA director Dana Lanza, there is real momentum building for building impact through greater alignment between philanthropies' invested assets, missions, grantmaking and personal values. This is a huge and positive development.

We're also starting to see chinks developing in the walls and "traditions" that separate organized philanthropy—especially grantmakers at exclusive gatherings like the EGA retreats—from the people and organizations who would like us to fund them. This dynamic creates an awful power imbalance that at times directly conflicts with the imperative for grassroots movement building which has never been more evident than it is today. I would probably trade a day spent with grantmakers for a day spent with grassroots activists almost anytime. Fortunately, this is not an either-or situation.

What changes do you see coming? What changes will you make happen? Who are you bringing with you to help lead the way?

JONATHAN SCOTT is President of the Singing Field Foundation, staffed by family volunteers, granting $250,000+ annually on environment, health, animals and arts. The foundation practices mission-related investing and "active ownership" through shareholder engagement and investments that align with our values. We are active in HEFN and Confluence Philanthropy. In his day job with Clean Water Action, Jon manages corporate partnerships and legacy giving. Board membership: EarthShare, Lebanon Opera House, NE Grassroots Environment Fund.

What Sustains You?

BY KASSANDRA HISHIDA
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

During our orientation we were asked, "What sustains you?" All my life, I have been sustained by the network of family, friends, and mentors who have walked alongside me throughout my personal and professional journeys. As I prepared to begin my fellowship, I was very nervous about moving across the country and being far away from my community. Who would sustain me now?

My fears and uncertainties began to melt away as I got to know my cohort members throughout our four days together in Ann Arbor, Michigan. While I greatly appreciated the professional development opportunities offered during our orientation, it was the stories and questions shared by my cohort members that most directly shaped my work and sustained me throughout this summer. Leaving orientation, it was empowering to know that I would be working alongside my new community of passionate, brilliant colleagues committed to facilitating transformative social change through both an environmental and equity lens.

Knowing that my EFP community had my back, I was able to more confidently step into my role as the Environmental Health and Justice Fellow at Toxics Action Center in Massachusetts. My newfound community continued to grow as I developed relationships with coworkers and community members involved in our various campaigns. I have been both sustained and inspired by their leadership, resilience, and commitment to achieving a just, green future through community-led organizing.

This summer, it made all the difference to connect with a group of peers who understood where I was coming from and had my back. Despite being scattered across the country, I was comforted by the fact that our cohort was only a group text away anytime we wanted to share good news or troubleshoot a challenge we were facing. As I move forward from this fellowship, I will continue to draw inspiration from my EFP cohort as well as the courageous community leaders fighting environmental racism throughout New England. Furthermore, I am committed to supporting programs like EFP that create opportunities for young leaders committed to environmental justice to come together, build community, and build the movement!

KASSANDRA HISHIDA earned her M.S. in Environmental Studies at the University of Oregon to better understand the interconnectedness of social and environmental injustices. Since graduating, she has been the Environmental Health and Justice Fellow at Toxics Action Center in Massachusetts. Moving forward, she hopes to draw upon these experiences to work alongside marginalized communities fighting environmental injustice throughout California's Central Valley.

EGA Inspires Action Down Under

BY AMANDA MARTIN

In 2002, a young bloke named Gary Tabor, working for the Wilburforce Foundation and married to an Australian, felt frustrated with what he could see of organized environmental philanthropy in Australia.

He produced a booklet called *Australia's Conservation Paradox: A report for the International Conservation Community*—outlining opportunities for US funders to consider giving to conservation issues in Australia. When a couple of Australian funders saw it, they contacted Gary and suggested he should have contacted them first. Gary explained that he had tried unsuccessfully to find environmental funders in Australia and he invited them to join the next EGA Retreat.

In 2003 four Australian funders attended the EGA Retreat, held in Toronto Canada. They were blown away—hundreds of environmental philanthropists debating, discussing, sharing and refining environmental giving!

They came home to Australia inspired and some of us came back the following year. That was my first EGA experience in Hawaii, supported by the Poola Foundation, with whom I was working. Together with a handful of other local funders, we established the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Association (AEGN) in 2008. Inspired by the EGA and linked with other international networks, we now have 115 Australian and 2 US environmental funder members. We too have an annual conference, a monthly newsletter, a website and lots of events. We borrowed and learned from EGA policies and processes and utilised ideas for our conferences and events. We have 5 staff and offices in Melbourne and Sydney and we have a goal of rapidly growing environmental philanthropy in Australia.

I have now been to five EGA retreats, each time accompanied by several AEGN members. Everyone comes back from an EGA retreat feeling energized and full of ideas and smart approaches to be more effective in their grantmaking. I always come home feeling more optimistic.

We have learnt so much from the EGA—from how to hold a good conference, to looking at member services, organisational policies, the value of affinity groups and ways of framing environmental issues. But it is the attention to culture and community that has been the most important thing that we have learnt from the EGA. Culture trumps strategy and attending an EGA retreat is a lesson in how important it is to build a network of people who share a culture of trust and respect, one that continues to challenge, inspire and build diversity. This has been a fundamental approach for the AEGN too and I take my hat off to all of you at the EGA who have worked so hard to hold on to these values and characteristics.

We have met many wonderful people at the EGA and hosted many EGAers in Australia. AEGN members wish you all a happy 30th anniversary celebration and we look forward to working with you over the next few decades.

In a world that feels fractured and with environmental systems on the edge of collapse, it is organisations like the EGA and the many fine people within it that are critical to the next few decades for as Margaret Mead said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

AMANDA MARTIN has worked in philanthropy for over a decade, having worked as Executive Officer for the Poola Foundation for four years before helping to establish the AEGN in 2009. She has specialised in environment and Indigenous grantmaking and more recently on building the skills and knowledge of funders on environmental issues as well as building different forms of collaboration. Amanda is a trained and skilled facilitator of groups and regularly uses this in her current role.

The Role of Philanthropy in Promoting Justice

BY LAUREN BERIONT
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

In 2013, the Overbrook Foundation convened leaders from across the country. The purpose? To create a common vision around building alignment and equity within the environmental movement. The strategy that emerged from this conversation and future meetings metamorphized into what is now known as the BEA (Building Equity for Alignment and Impact). BEA seeks to improve the effectiveness of the environmental field by increasing the pool of resources for grassroots groups and building power with those most impacted by environmental threats.

I look to BEA for inspiration—it illustrates the possibility of philanthropy, nonprofits, and the community to work together to increase the impact of the environmental field in a manner based on reciprocity, trust, deep listening, and collective action. It signals the importance of being as passionate about equity as we are about the environment. Can we in environmental philanthropy heed this wisdom and work towards sustainability for all, while being truly innovative, understanding who we are, and crafting solutions as big and bold as the issues we face?

My general insight as a queer woman, an environmentalist, and a community organizer is that we need to come at this from every angle. We've dangerously decoupled human suffering and environmental degradation, when in fact, they are one in the same and can only been understood, let alone solved, as one. And here are some ways we do that:

- **Pay attention to our inner selves.** Arguably more than any other sector, we in philanthropy have the resources to take the time to reflect, to innovate, and to be strategic at personal, professional, and systemic levels. If we can't prioritize equity and make time for self-reflection, how can we expect it of our grantees?
- **Embrace intersections to forge new partnerships.** Green issues are urban issues and conservation issues are also about justice. We fail to embrace our interdependence partially out of fear that a more ecological approach will dismantle nearly five decades of issues-based work and that social justice is a distraction from the mission at hand. Let's change this narrative and actively invest in cross-issue work led by a diverse group of people.
- **Be open to new ways of doing things.** I believe that we can build a dynamic movement that evolves to embrace the complexity of our collective narrative, admit our mistakes, and set a course for a sustainable future. And it starts with the simple question: *Who is at the center of this program? Our grantmaking?* We can only answer that question when we truly know ourselves, and when we trust the wisdom of those who see the world from a different angle than we do.

The shift towards equity ultimately leads to more effective and widespread socio-environmental outcomes. I don't have it all figured out; I'm still learning just like you. I will continue to reflect on what it means to be an equity champion, invest in just and authentic partnerships, and explore the possibility of new opportunities.

We need to co-imagine a new vision of just environmentalism. It needs to draw from our respective strengths and skills. And importantly, our work needs to be motivated by love and compassion, not naïve and blind love, but fierce and accountable love.

LAUREN BERIONT is originally from the shores of New Jersey, and now lives with her partner in Michigan. She has a BS from the University of Michigan in Environmental Science and Sustainable Systems, and recently returned to graduate school for a Masters in Macro Social Work. Lauren is focused on fundamentally re-imagining the way people work together through mutually-beneficial partnerships for community well-being for all. As an Environmental Fellow with the Pisces Foundation, Lauren is incredibly gracious for the experience and insight from her colleagues and her work.

The Value of Community: Support Systems, Friends, and Perspective

BY SCOTT CULLEN

EGA is a special community filled with love, respect, passion, learning and of course when we all come together, FUN!!!

Those of us who are lucky enough to work in philanthropy have an amazing opportunity to impact the world—for good, or if we screw up, for bad—and as such it is not a responsibility we can take lightly. Being in this position requires us to be thoughtful, compassionate and to always think hard about the consequences of our actions.

I have learned a lot from EGA, through both the insightful, inspiring programming and the relationship-building. The people and insights EGA has brought into my life and work have forever changed me as a person and grantmaker (and they are too numerous to call out)—*except* I have to send love to Harriet Barlow and Betsy Taylor as I know I am far from alone in saying that these two amazing women have inspired me and countless others. They exemplify the humility, compassion, hard work and respect that I strive to emulate.

Congrats EGA on 30 years! The impact has been enormous, but the challenges we face require we all double down and work even harder and I know we're up for it! So what should the next years of EGA look like? My 2 cents are:

Community: We need to stay positive and focused and EGA brings us closer and gives us plenty of food for thought—and discussion. EGA should be the "big tent" as it is a diverse community and we all benefit from that.

Collaboration: As big as any one of our budgets is, we can't go it alone. More than ever, we have to find ways to work together, ensure that our strategies are complementary and discover synergies that can multiply our effect.

Creativity: Our shared goal, saving the planet, is a big one—so it requires big thinking. EGA has-and should continue to-provide stimuli and time to forge relationships to learn how we can further strengthen our movement for these challenges.

Complexity: The world is an incredibly complicated place, which is so much of its beauty and intrigue. But, the problems we face are complicated and that means we have to DO OUR HOMEWORK, share what we learn and not shy away from complexity, look to those closest to the problems for their insights and leadership, and maybe most importantly, learn from our mistakes.

Commitment: Now is the time to lean into this work, and we have so much to do in the coming decades. We all collectively must also work to get more aggressive and seek to increase our effectiveness which I think comes from the next C connection.

Connection: EGA keeps us all connected and we need one another more now than ever. I was privileged to serve on the EGA board and learned a great deal from the experience (and got as much from it as I gave) and next generation leaders please help EGA continue to thrive and your work will benefit as well as our broader community.

Last but definitely not least, we are lucky to have amazing staff and leadership at EGA and I am thankful for their hard work and want to make sure they know how appreciated they are and all they do for our collective movement.

With gratitude for all you do, *Scott*

SCOTT CULLEN is the Executive Director of GRACE Communications Foundation which develops innovative strategies to increase public awareness of issues created by our current industrial food system and to advocate for more sustainable alternatives. Scott is an environmental attorney and previously worked on Coastal and Marine conservation issues and on energy issues with various non-profits. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Environmental Grantmakers Association, the Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders Network. Presently, he is on the Steering Committee of the Global Alliance on the Future of Food as well as a Trustee of the Vermont Law School.

The Language of Community Justice

BY MALAVIKA SAHAI
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Before entering the Environmental Fellows Program (EFP), I was an outsider to the world of grantmaking. I knew grants existed and that they were distributed to nonprofits to carry out organizational work, but I didn't know how. As a lifelong student, who went directly from an undergraduate college to graduate school, I knew that doing work in an environmental nonprofit was likely my future. I didn't realize, however, how ignorant I was to the importance of the language of funding until becoming a part of the 2017 EFP cohort.

Through my EFP placement, I saw the effects of grantmaking firsthand in the rollout of a National Wildlife Federation program to create habitat space on church grounds in urban centers. These grants affected the work not only in the region, but also the possibility of expanding the work outside of the Midwest. I had a personal interest in this program being available on a larger scale because of its particular focus in environmental justice, and language in the application stage of engaging congregations in the work that explicitly places impacts on people first in the environmental vision.

While other programs by the same organization may have similar key co-benefits to marginalized populations, the importance of spelling out how the work will benefit those suffering from environmental injustices in language used in programming is crucial to community sign-off and eventual success in curbing the effects of injustice. This same language, that speaks directly to the organizational experience of groups working to bring environmental justice to their communities, I believe to be important to share in calls for grant applications as well. I hope that in the future of grantmaking we see more community-centered language that is compassionate to environmental organizations that conduct their work with people first in mind. I believe that expanding the view of what counts as environmental work, and funding more projects which work to place people in the safe environment around them is crucial to an intersectionally just future, and that foundations play a key role in seeing this happen.

MALAVIKA SAHAI is a graduate student studying Environmental Justice and Environmental Policy and Planning at the University of Michigan. She is a member of the Environmental Fellows Program cohort of 2017 and as a part of the program worked as a fellow at the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional office. She is originally from McLean, Virginia and currently lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Thinking Forward on EGA's 30th Anniversary

BY RUTH HENNIG

Five years ago I reflected on my early days as a grantmaker and remembered my first EGA meeting in EGA's 25th anniversary journal. Now as EGA is turning 30, I'm leaving philanthropy after 29 years at The John Merck Fund.

So this seems like the right moment to think about what we've learned over the last 30 years that can guide the next generation of environmental philanthropists as they assume leadership from my generation of funders.

There is no environmental protection without people. That is self-evident now, but it wasn't as obvious 30 years ago. When I started in philanthropy the big issues were deforestation, particularly in tropical rainforests, and biodiversity destruction. Farmers, ranchers, loggers and indigenous peoples were viewed as part of the problem, and were usually considered extraneous or even roadblocks to the solution. Although it's clear to us today, it took environmentalists time to realize that people were and will always be an integral part of protecting natural resources and habitats. (The irony, of course, is that while humans are the cause of virtually all environmental destruction, only we can end it. As Bill McKibben wrote in The End of Nature, the fate of all Earth's ecological systems is now determined by human actions.

Similarly, our efforts to stave off climate change faltered when we relied solely on government policy and regulation. Meaningful progress in reducing greenhouse gases occurs when people become engaged where they live, learn, work, play and worship. That's why it's so critical that the environmental field (it's still not clear that it's a movement) mirror both the growing diversity in the US and around the world, as well as the people who are most directly endangered in the face of environmental degradation—who are usually not driving a Prius and shopping at Whole Foods. It gives me hope that the environmental community is becoming less white and less privileged!

Health Supercedes (Trumps) Environment

Human health and planetary health will always be interdependent. Like all other species, humans depend on clean air, water, food and functioning ecosystems. Human health isn't possible on a sick planet. We are the canaries in our own coal mine.

But within that integral connection, protecting health and safety for our families is always going to be more visceral, direct and important a goal or value than environmental protection is for most people. As environmentalists, we need to acknowledge that basic reality and begin to work in a health frame if we really want to engage people.

Try this thought experiment: How many environmental issues can be incorporated into a framework of Health for All? This graphic tells us that it's easier than we realize.

Economies that Foster Justice and Enable Many to Prosper

Looking at our world now, it is difficult to believe an alternative to global capitalism that is more just and less destructive could be a reality. Is it actually possible to fundamentally alter the way the global economy works so that rewards are more equitably distributed and natural capital is used sustainably? Can people be motivated by something other than the drive to acquire wealth and the comfort and security it buys? What exactly would such an economic system look like? And will we ever uncouple corporate power and governance as it exists in America today?

I don't pretend to know the answers. But I encourage funders and activist partners to envision, explore and experiment even on a micro-level. The world badly needs models of economies that can better deliver justice, equity and a healthy environment than our current system does.

Corporations and Market Sectors can be Allies

But even within the global economy we have today, we need to shift our outmoded conception of business as inherently the enemy. Power and capital have gradually shifted from government to the private sector over the last 50 years; and private sector innovation is increasingly being applied to social problem solving.

At the same time, businesses are now operating in market environments that are demanding increased transparency and improved performance under the rubric of sustainability. Environmentalists and other social change advocates should be harnessing these private sector assets so that they can jointly achieve shared goals. The business community's defense of the Paris Climate Accord in response to the Trump Administration's threat to withdraw from it is only one example of the possibilities for co-engagement between the corporate and public interest sectors.

Approaching Planetary Limits: What Happens Next?

How will the next generation of environmental leaders and funders grapple with the impacts of 8 billion people, unsustainable levels of consumption amidst of resource constraints, and an as yet unknown degree of ecological collapse? With innovation and growing leadership.

Equipped with the capacity to go beyond what my generation has done in approaching problems and seeking solutions. And by recognizing that power is better wielded in the hands of many rather than a select few.

Although it's hard to see the future, I'm optimistic about what we'll find when we observe EGA's 50th anniversary. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, the arc of history is long but it bends toward (ecological) justice. Those words of wisdom have always had a special resonance for me because our work in social change is usually hard and progress is often too slow. But together, as the baton passes to new generations of environmental activists and funders, we can hope to see that vision realized.

RUTH HENNIG has worked in the environmental field for over 30 years, first at the Conservation Law Foundation and then as Executive Director of The John Merck Fund. She served in management roles at EGA, Consultative Group on Biological Diversity, and Health and Environmental Funders Network. She is on the board of League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. Ruth helped create Health Babies Bright Futures, New England Grassroots Environment Fund, and SmartPower.

Identity and Environmental Justice

BY CAROLINA PRADO
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Working with environmental justice activists in the U.S.-México border region and in my summer placement at the Solutions Project, I have found the critical importance of intersectionality. Whether the issue is a toxic waste dump, or promoting clean energy, the road to better environmental problem solving is interlaced with issues of social injustice and privilege and oppression. Intersectionality, a term coined by feminist theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw that argues that people experience each issue through the lens of all their overlapping identities. In the words of Audre Lorde, "There is no such thing as single issue struggle, because we do not live single issue lives."

Through my work in collaboration with the Colectivo Chilpancingo in Tijuana, I found that issues of environmental remediation of a toxic waste plant, the struggle to control diesel emissions, and river channelization were all tied to issues of imperialism, poverty, and gender. The activists on both sides of the border were struggling to have cleaner and healthier neighborhoods as well as for credibility as gendered laborers. The issues of governance and imperialism are interlinked with those of lead poisoning in children and high particulate matter concentrations in the air.

This summer I have been working on a project looking at climate change and climate solutions narrative in the media. What most of my fourteen interviewees over the summer have repeated is that climate change needs to be linked to intersectional issues for it to resonate for people as a pressing problem. If I can't see how renewable energy or sustainable agriculture can benefit my life as a queer, first generation Chicana student, I will not see why I have to get involved. The key to strategizing for people to get involved in something so seemingly abstract is to make climate change intersectional.

As a bicultural student and activist, my perspectives on what is needed for the future of environmental grant-making is based on my own intersecting identities and experience. I see intersectionality as the key for making environmental grant making better. Environmental groups that are embedded in their communities and have multi issue campaigns will definitely be the future.

CAROLINA PRADO is a PhD candidate researching environmental justice movements at the U.S.-México border and community participation in border environmental governance. She is also an activist in domestic violence counseling, food justice and supporting Zapatismo. This summer she has been working with EFP and The Solutions Project on a qualitative project exploring climate solutions narratives. In the fall she will start her job as a Senior Researcher at the Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego, CA.

Interwoven

The Textile Sector as an Emerging Area of Environmental Impact and Engagement

BY SARAH KELLY

As the EGA community looks ahead at this critical moment, one message is clear—we need new ways to make environmental issues meaningful to a wider audience.

The potential to create these personal connections was what drew me to my previous work in the food movement. At farmstands and grocery stores, I witnessed the moment when people suddenly understood their personal connection to larger ecosystems and asked what, to me, is one of the most powerful questions we can pose—"Where does this come from?"

This question matters for two reasons. First, consumption is the core driver of the environmental impacts we are creating. As Annie Leonard wrote in The Story of Stuff, "if we do not . . . change the way we redistribute, consume, and dispose of our Stuff . . . the economy as it is will kill the planet." More positively, framing environmental issues through personal connections to the goods we use every day is a key strategy for more effective communication and engagement. The food movement has been notably successful at this approach, while also remembering that pleasure, connection, and health must also be part of the message to truly change behavior.

Drawing on these lessons, I've been exploring a new area of environmental funding that I hope can expand this approach—sustainability in the fiber and textile industry.

Like food, fiber and textiles impact us in the most personal ways. We wear them next to our skin, sleep on them every night, and line the surfaces of our homes and offices with them. Yet we have largely neglected to ask the same powerful questions about the textiles that surround us: Where does this come from? Who produced this? How were they treated? What chemicals are on this? Where will this go when I am done with it?

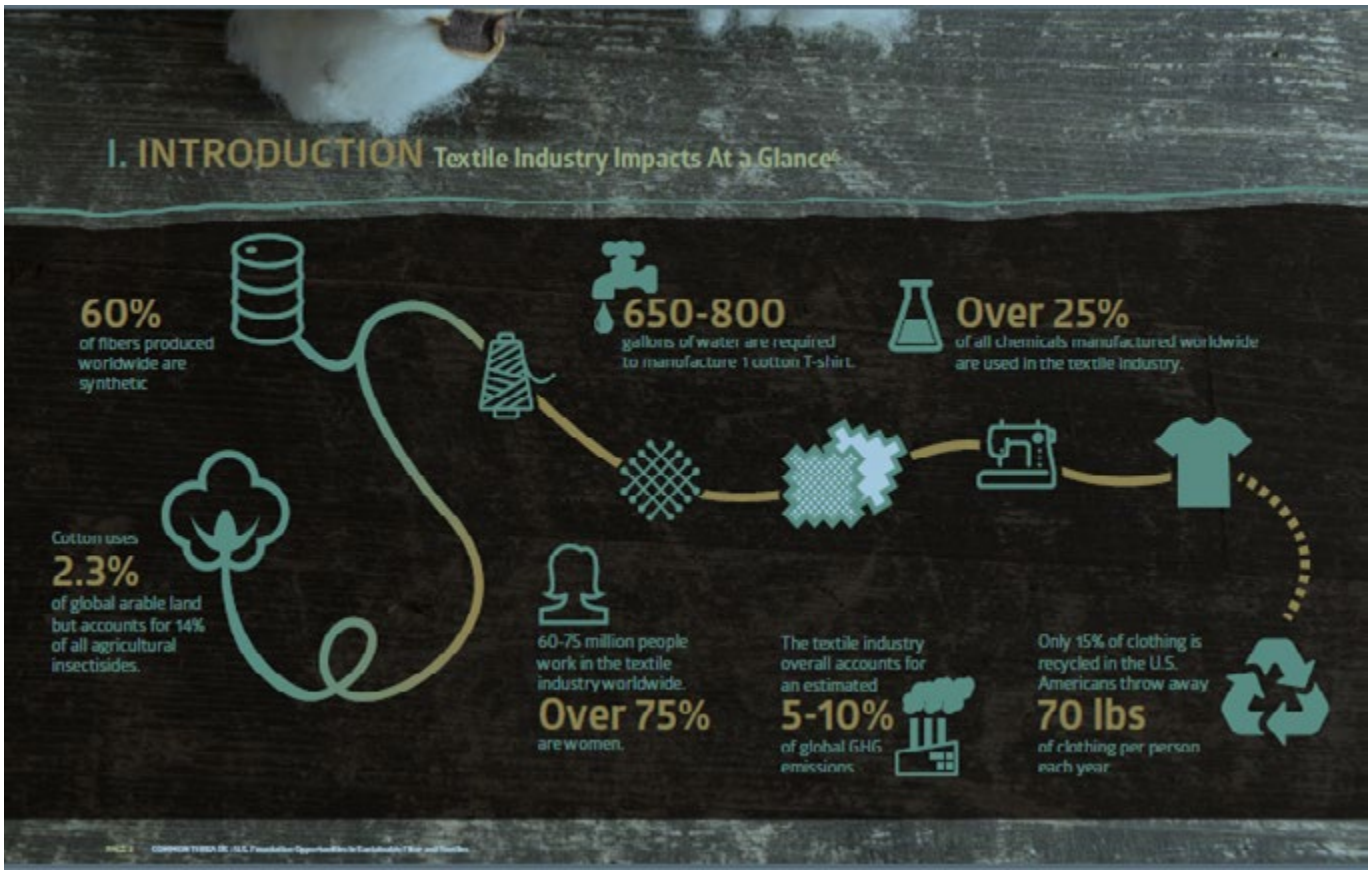
Answering these questions quickly revealed a cascade of severe environmental and social impacts buried out of sight in a multi-layered global supply chain, as well as a growing U.S. movement for change. I've summarized this research in a white paper, Common Threads: U.S. Foundation Opportunities in Sustainable Fiber and Textiles, just published by Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF).

Consider some key impacts summarized in this infographic:

These numbers show that improving textile industry sustainability is critical for reducing environmental impacts. But just as importantly, I believe that drawing on people's real connections with this industry is an opportunity to mobilize environmental engagement in people from a range of generations and political leanings.

Looking ahead, I see particular opportunity in the fact that the textile industry was, and could be again, a source of the U.S. manufacturing jobs that have received much recent attention. We have the chance to increase transparency and sustainability while engaging new allies in the goal of "reshoring" American textile production and jobs, a trend that is already on the rise. Consider Eric Henry of TS Designs—this North Carolina T-shirt manufacturer had to lay off nearly all his workers after NAFTA, but has rebuilt a complete "Dirt To Shirt" supply chain of local cotton farmers and processors. Here in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Island Foundation is helping to bring together fiber farmers, processors, and the mills that remain from our long textile legacy to begin a process of reconnecting a local supply chain.

Meanwhile, across the country, interest in soil health and the Carbon sequestration potential of well-managed regenerative grazing lands is connecting farmers, ranchers,



climate scientists, and advocates like Fibershed around shared interests in local textile supply chains. At the same time, communications organizations like Remake are targeting a new generation of millennial and Gen Z activists with stories and personal connections, encouraging them to ask #whomademyclothes?

Finally, the textile sector is an opportunity to implement the integrated capital approach that has been emerging in philanthropy. Rebuilding local textile processing infrastructure will call for capital investment from current and next-generation impact investors, alongside grantmaking strategies. Global textile and apparel companies also face a host of resource risks, including water scarcity and competition between food and fibers for agricultural land, making investor activism a key strategy for reform.

Moving forward, three key lessons are already emerging:

We need to incorporate a focus on justice and equity up front and bring the voices of those most impacted by the extractive global textile industry into the conversation from the start.

- We need to think systemically about addressing these linked environmental, social, and policy issues.
- And we need better stories, not just statistics, to truly tap the power of this topic to engage new audiences.

As EGA celebrates its 30th Anniversary and seeks ways to make environmental issues more broadly meaningful, I'm hopeful that members with many interests will see the textile sector as an opportunity. We have the chance to support a new movement for clean, ethical, and sustainably-produced textiles and an opportunity to make environmental issues, as the slogan goes, part of the "fabric of our lives."

SARAH KELLY is Senior Program Officer at the Island Foundation, where she manages the Environment program. She previously served as E.D. of Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership and has also worked on a 200-head sheep farm and in theater costume shops. She serves on the Board of New England Grassroots Environment Fund and the Membership Committee of SAFSF and holds a B.A. in History from Yale and an M.S. in Plant and Soil Science from UMass Amherst.

Equity & Climate Action

BY MAYRA CRUZ
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

As a public health practitioner who specializes in climate change, it has been difficult to witness President Trump threatening our progress on climate change. Environmental regulations that keep our air and water clean are threatened such as President Obama's Clean Power Plan. Environmental Justice communities are already experiencing the ongoing effects of climate change. The list goes on as environmental injustices continue throughout our country.

While the situation seems dire, my hope for the future has been renewed thanks to my fellowship this summer. I worked at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in Boston and created a Net Zero Planning Guidebook to guide municipalities on their greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies. I looked at countless cities, towns, and even countries who are taking big steps to diminish their contribution to climate change and are succeeding. Along the way I discovered that many did not inherently include equity throughout their strategies, but did eventually find some shining examples. Seattle created an Equity & Environment Agenda created by an Equity & Environment Steering Committee. New York City's latest climate action plan, OneNYC, provides strategies to ensure every citizen benefits and not a select few. Lancaster, CA launched a Low Income Housing Solar Program that provides low income residents with affordable and clean energy. The examples exist and we need more of this action to ensure everyone benefits from renewable energy, green jobs, and improved living conditions.

While federal funds may not be available in the next few years for communities to use, environmental philanthropy can step in to support the businesses, cities, towns, and individuals who want to fight climate change, but lack the resources to do so. This is especially true of underserved communities struggling to protect themselves against climate change. The solutions are available to beat climate change in an equitable manner as noted by the previous examples. Environmental philanthropy can and should support those who are using climate action as a way to address inequalities in our society.

MAYRA CRUZ recently graduated with a Master of Public Health in Environmental Health Sciences and a Certificate in Climate & Health. Thanks to the Barr Foundation, she worked over the summer at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in Boston as a Clean Energy Fellows. During her time there she created a Net Zero Planning Guidebook for all 101 cities and towns to use throughout their net zero planning.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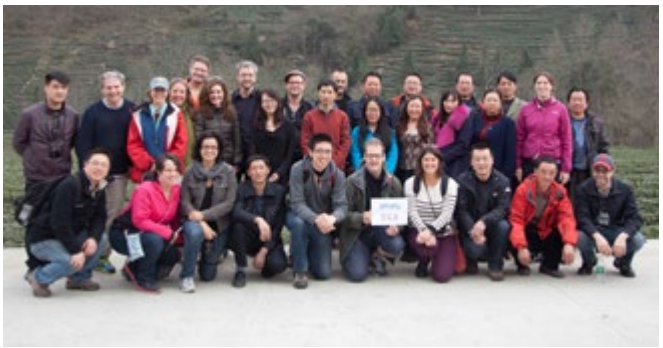
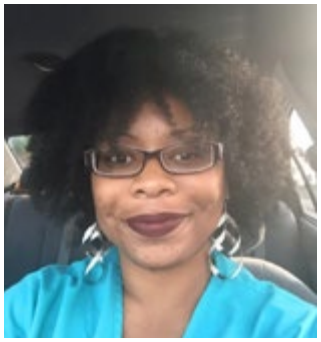


Grassroots Partnerships for Environmental Grantmaking

BY ASHLEY BELL
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW



I was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Although my father was around, I was predominantly raised by my mother, who, to her credit, went out of her way, to ensure that I grew up with, and around people that were ethnically and racially diverse. Prior to attending college, I hadn't thought about issues surrounding diversity and racism, because up until that point I had never felt like the "black student" or the "black friend." I realized that there was inequality, injustice and racism in the world and that they existed in my own back yard. What I didn't understand, was how inextricably linked they were.

While in graduate school, I completed a South African summer immersion program. It was this program, that illustrated the role the environment plays in contributing to and furthering inequality, injustices and disparities, and how all of that, stems from the umbrella of racism. I now, not only saw the environment as the grass, soil, plants, trees or animals, but rather as this living, breathing entity that is comprised of not only physical attributes, but cultural, social and economic attributes, and that together, they all contribute to one's overall quality of life. This solidified that I wanted a career in improving human health and ensuring justice via the environment, while engaging the community. A noticeably absent voice in South Africa.

What does the future hold for environmental grantmaking? Ultimately, I think the future of environmental grantmaking lies within forging relationships and partnerships with grassroots organizations. For it is the grassroots organizations that truly understand what it means to be on the "front lines" of change. It is them, the people, that need a spot at the table because they truly understand the needs of the community in which they serve. Funders miss out on opportunities to effect true change, when we approach issues with the "top-down help" mentality. If we hope to see sustainable change, funders must prioritize forging these lasting relationships and change the power dynamic within philanthropy. "Change not Charity" is a guiding value for NEGEF, and it should guide us all.

ASHLEY BELL is a PhD Student at Tulane University and I am pursuing my degree in Global Environmental Health Sciences. My passion within environmental health is environmental justice. The merging of social and environmental issues is right up my alley because I wholeheartedly believe that quality of health should not be geographically or status dependent. In my spare time I like to listen to music (Justin Timberlake), read a book (that's not school related), play with Mylo (my mini dachshund), or sleep.

Environmental Philanthropy—An Evolution Underway

BY PEGI DOVER

In the more than 15 years since the establishment of CEGN, the shape and style of philanthropy has evolved considerably throughout North America and elsewhere.

Increased collaboration; more sophisticated evaluation tools; a growing emphasis on transparency; and a clear desire to look beyond the grantmaking role of funders are just some of the changes that have changed the course of the philanthropic sector as a whole.

The work of environmental funders in Canada and beyond has been a key part of this evolution and has been identified in particular with some of the following changes:

- Expanded Scope: In the early years of our network here in Canada, the majority of grantmaking by CEGN members was focused on the protection of species and spaces. While that continues to be an important focus for many funders, the issues of sustainable cities; fresh water; energy and climate; and food security have emerged as important policy and engagement areas for many of our members.

- Systems Approach: Complex sustainability issues which are rooted in the health of the environment but also include economic, social and cultural dimensions lie at the heart of much of the work with which are members are now engaged. A siloed approach to issues is no longer working and funders and others are exploring systemic approaches which involve a range of players and tactics, as well as much deeper time commitments. New skills to navigate these waters successfully, including partnership brokering and systems mapping are in demand.

- Investing for Impact: A number of funders are realizing that the traditional suite of philanthropic tools is no longer adequate to the societal challenges they are trying to address. The growing emphasis on a social finance perspective and engagement in a spectrum from grantmaking through to mission-aligned investing is taking hold within the Boards of many of our members. Other funders are opting for direct program engagement to achieve their goals, as well as or instead of grantmaking. Still others are beginning to support different kinds of grantees beyond the traditional NGO community. For example, innovative work with the financial sector by one of our members is bringing new allies to the goal of achieving a more sustainable future. Other funders in Canada, as well as the broader charitable sector, are focusing on the reform of charities regulations to allow for new kinds of investments, as well as clarifying regulations to ensure a strong public policy role for charities.

- Indigenous Partners and Reconciliation: Many of our members are now working with Indigenous organizations and communities and others are eager to do so. CEGN and many individual foundations are signatories to The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action which was presented at the closing hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in June of 2015. However, the role for philanthropy in the broader process of reconciliation is still very much in discussion. With recent court decisions confirming the role that Canada's Indigenous peoples play in decisions affecting the use of much of our country's land base and resources, there is clearly a close alignment between Indigenous concerns and the work of a number of environmental funders.

- Global Tools and Targets: The boundaries between domestic and international issues have become increasingly blurred.

- The Paris Climate Agreement places the carbon reduction work of Canadian governments, civil society organizations and corporations firmly within a global context. The opportunities to look beyond our borders for partnerships and learning and leveraging opportunities to tackle climate change abound and the need to do so is even more urgent, given the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw from the Agreement.

- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals also afford another opportunity to position philanthropic work in Canada within an ambitious global framework. The 17 goals to be achieved by 2030—including sustainable cities; clean water; climate action; responsible consumption; and clean energy—apply across all countries, not just the global south. The SDGs provide a platform for establishing common cause among civil society groups to forge co-ordinated strategies with the goal of ensuring governments meet their 2030 commitments across the suite of targets.

- The United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment are being adopted as a benchmark by many investors around the world, including by some Canadian funders who want to demonstrate a public commitment to responsible investing.

- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, regarded as an important standard for the treatment of Indigenous peoples around the world, resonates deeply with Indigenous peoples in Canada and is seen by some communities as a starting point for many discussions around philanthropic engagement.

Against this backdrop of change and ongoing evolution, CEGN is undertaking a new strategic plan with the goal of establishing "A Vibrant Network of Funders Advancing a Sustainable Canada". Based on these goals, our core strategic goals are to; i) Catalyze Collaboration; ii) Build and Share Skills and Knowledge; and iii) Grow Investments for a Sustainable Canada.

While the first two strategies have been core to CEGN's work since the beginning, the current strategic plan calls for these activities to be carried out with greater intentionality and strong alignment to the goal of advancing a sustainable Canada. The third strategy "grow investments for a sustainable Canada" is a new one, reflecting the desire to encourage funders to use the full array of financial mechanisms in support of sustainability. Another salient factor in the strategic plan is a move towards an emphasis on sustainability philanthropy, rather than environmental philanthropy. This recognizes the interconnected nature of environmental, social, and economic issues and the fact that in many cases the resolution of environmental concerns requires an integrated approach that also addresses social and economic needs.

It is still early days in the implementation of our strategic plan and, to be honest, we are learning how much learning we need to do. One ambitious funder collaboration did not yield the intended policy impact, but has led to our embracing developmental evaluation as a tool to help better ensure positive outcomes for future collaborations. Our "growing investments'" work is still in its design phase, but we are realizing the need to build relationships with the financial staff of our members and increase staff knowledge of the investment 'space'. Even our own branding is coming under scrutiny as we wrestle with whether the word 'environmental' is impeding our ability to foster the partnerships necessary to help achieve a sustainable future for Canada. There is lots and lots of learning ahead.

CEGN got its start when pioneering funders here in Canada looked south of the border and saw the transformative work being undertaken by the Environmental Grantmakers' Association. We continue to be inspired by EGA and its members and are hugely appreciative of the network's openness and sharing spirit not only with CEGN but with other funder affinity groups around the globe. Congratulations to EGA on this 30th Anniversary and many thanks for your leadership.

PEGI DOVER is Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network (CEGN).

Prior to joining CEGN, Pegi was Executive Director of Project Canoe, an organization that provides wilderness canoe trips for youth facing barriers in their lives. Previous work experiences includes her role as Director of Communications for WWF Canada and as a Program Officer with both the Donner Canadian and Max Bell foundations. Pegi holds a Masters in Journalism from Northwestern University and a M.A. in Political Science from Carleton University.

Participatory, Inclusive and Just Grantmaking

BY RAGINI KATHAIL
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

The bulk of my experience is in international development and environmental health, addressing questions of water security, sanitation, and agriculture, among others. In particular, one story from my time in India has gnawed at me for many years. The Government of India and major international funders have spent resources on building tens of millions of toilets in an effort to eliminate the practice of open defecation, which is linked to environmental health concerns. However, a large percentage of these toilets go unused. There are complex and interlocking reasons why this is the case, but I have come to realize that the heavy emphasis on building toilets is important but insufficient for improved sanitation; it is likely that communities would choose to spend those dollars differently.

Allowing communities to make these funding choices—that is, participatory grantmaking—is the way forward. This process has been gaining ground for the last several years, engaging constituencies, increasing transparency, and mediating between grassroots activists and grantmaking organizations. How we fund environmental projects is of equal importance to the projects themselves.

I compare the toilet situation in India with my time at the Natural Resources Defense Council. As a named recipient of the SouthWest Organizing Project's 1990 letter excoriating environmental organizations for their disregard of environmental justice, the NRDC has struggled with issues of inclusivity. Since then, they have taken major steps towards building a robust environmental justice program. There is opportunity here for collaboration, for using links like those the NRDC has built with community organizations to bring those communities into decision-making processes.

To be clear, communities will make choices with which individual funders disagree. They will prioritize programs differently. They may not measure success the same way. Sometimes, they may be wrong, just as grantmakers sometimes are. But this ceding of power is important. If we accept that inclusivity, solidarity, bottom-up change, and just relationships are the basis for a more equitable world, power must be redistributed. To change the balance of power that comes with financial resources is to create transformative change. It is hard work, but it is work worth doing.

RAGINI KATHAIL is an Environmental Fellow at the Natural Resources Defense Council in New York, working on issues around toxic chemicals, fossil fuels, and climate change. She worked in India for a total of two and a half years on water, sanitation, and health. She has an MPH from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and a BA from Pomona College. Her interests include environmental justice, social determinants of health, and water security.

Knowing Your Seat

BY MARY M. JONES
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Growing up with family scattered throughout Texas, I spent a lot of time in the car. Although my folks are pretty easy-going, we had one hard rule on our holiday hauls across the state: whoever is driving is in charge. Once I turned 16 and earned a spot in the rotating driving shifts, I loved being in the driver's seat on our road trips. It felt awesome to have full command of the music selection, car temperature, route choices, and even control the speed. So awesome, it was hard to give it up.

The thing is, driver's seats aren't limited to cars.

After undergrad, a friend and I wrote a $10,000 grant to create the Townsend Food Project, which focused on food access in the neighborhood around Townsend Community Center in Richmond, Indiana. I had volunteered for several years at the Center, and I was convinced that what the neighborhood needed was its own farmer's market. Although our weekly farmstand and other activities of the Food Project were well received, if you went to the Center today, the only evidence of that summer would be some colorful raised beds, proudly sprouting mostly weeds.

As I reflect on the Food Project, I am reminded that meaningful, lasting change can't happen when people like me take the driver's seat, no matter how great our ideas or intentions. Instead, we need to challenge ourselves and embrace the backseat to support community-driven change.

This is not a passive role. Those of us in the backseat can offer the driver guidance, watch for hazards, and contribute towards fuel costs. The key is, even when we hop out of the car, it keeps moving forward.

As change-makers, we want to build things that will outlast us, especially those of us interested in sustainability and philanthropy. Looking at environmental issues from the 30,000 foot view, it can be tempting to steer organizations towards certain issues, directions or solutions. If I have learned anything about transformational change, however, it is to yield to the wisdom and leadership of community partners instead of my own.

Sometimes, it's better to be in the backseat.

MARY JONES is a 2017 EFP Fellow. Through the program, she worked with the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars at the University of Michigan. She has an M.S. in Natural Resources and Environment from the University of Michigan with a focus on Environmental Justice and a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Earlham College. Thanks to the EFP network, she is now working as a Community Organizer for Toxics Action Center in Western Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Road Ahead Will Be Defined by Its Intersections

BY FARHAD EBRAHIMI

To say that the current political moment presents a challenge to our work would be a tremendous understatement. We're in the middle of a crisis—and not just a political crisis, but an environmental, economic, and cultural crisis as well.

We're also in the middle of a populist moment, in which established authority is no longer seen as legitimate. To some, this may seem to exacerbate the crises before us. On the contrary, I believe that a shift away from "business as usual" represents our most promising opportunity to move forward. It was business as usual that got us into this mess, and it will take a powerful social movement of visionary opposition to get us out.

With all of this in mind, I'd like to draw our attention to two encouraging (although not always aligned) trends within environmental philanthropy. Neither would be sufficient on its own, but an overall approach that incorporates and builds upon the best qualities of both is essential to our shared work moving forward.

First, I'd like to highlight our growing understanding of the need to build new political power and to shift existing power relationships.

We have deep policy expertise in the environmental movement. But, without the requisite political power to influence collective decision making, those policies are worth little more than the paper that they're printed on.

In particular, we've begun to recognize that impacted communities are among the most effective advocates for their own interests—not just as spokespeople, but as organizers and campaigners on their own behalf. As a result, we've seen much more interest in supporting the grassroots organizing sector as critical partners to the more established (and more traditional) environmental groups.

But there is still work to be done. While some of our grants may have shifted, our issue silos (and the organizing constraints that they represent) have remained mostly intact. And, perhaps worse yet, we're still falling back on our old habits of top-down direction when it comes to questions of policy, messaging, and sometimes even overall strategy.

Second, I'd like to highlight our growing interest in the concept of "new economy."

We've long recognized that economic development is the primary driver of the environmental challenges that we face. That having been said, it's only more recently that we've directed our attention to the overall economic system in which said development takes place.

Whether it be innovations in sustainable production and consumption, challenges to the economic orthodoxy of infinite growth, or nascent interest in the concept of "just transition," we've shifted our spotlight to subjects that can no longer be neglected. One need look no further than the vision statements and the session titles from the last few EGA Annual Fall Retreats to see how the center of gravity has moved.

But there is work to be done here as well. Many of these conversations remain conceptual. And, while we may come across as economic futurists in some ways, we've yet to fully embrace some of the most basic concerns of economic justice. We may talk a lot about how something is made—what resources it consumes, what waste it generates, etc—but we're not talking nearly enough about who owns the factory or what the working conditions are like inside.

* * *

To meet the challenges ahead, we must continue to connect our environmental work to related work around political power and new economic thinking. We won't make

any progress on any of these crises unless we can surface, and then act upon, all the ways in which they are deeply interconnected.

To really do this right, we must:

- Take a social movement approach to questions of politics and political power. Authentic, lasting political power is built from the bottom up—not just from a single campaign, and not just on a single issue. We cannot support transformational work unless we shed our transactional constraints.

- Acknowledge not only the effective advocacy of impacted communities, but their visionary leadership as well. This includes recognizing their contributions to the development of policy, communications, overall strategy, and much, much more.

- Adopt an authentic just transition framework in all of our economic thinking. It's not simply a question of where we're going; it's also a question of how we're going to get there. We cannot allow our environmental solutions to reinforce the same patterns in wealth extraction and labor exploitation that define our current economic crisis.

- Further align our investment portfolios with our grant making. If top-down economic development has been the primary driver of the challenges that we face, then bottom-up economic development must be part of the solution. Economic power and political power must be mutually reinforcing.

- Apply an overall ecosystem lens to our work. Ecosystems are not simply lists of plants and animals; they are webs of relationships. Some of these relationships will be driven by affinity, while others will be driven by tension. We must learn to navigate these complexities and allocate resources equitably.

- Incorporate strategic thinking around narrative and cultural power. The building and leveraging of cultural power allows impacted communities to not only influence how they are perceived, but also to expand our sense of what's possible. To build something lasting, we must start here.

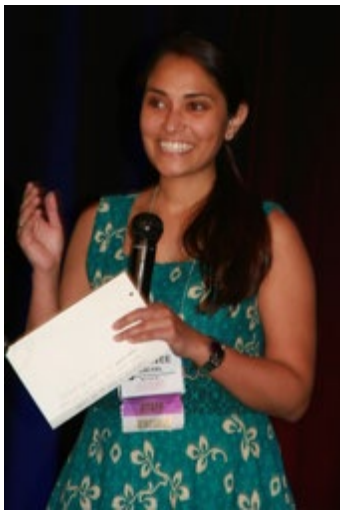
* * *

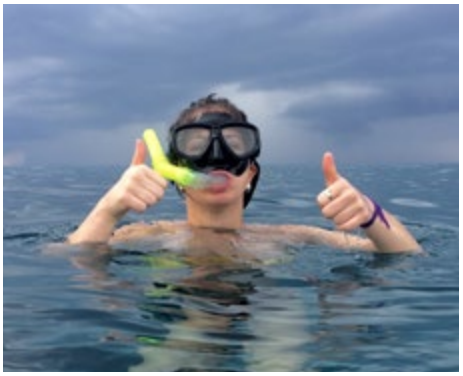
And finally, if we're serious about incorporating an analysis around economic injustice into our environmental work, then we must wrestle with the undeniable fact that philanthropy itself is the byproduct of one of the biggest economic injustices of them all—the extraction, consolidation, and enclosure of wealth (and hence power) into a small number of hands.

Each of us may respond to these circumstances differently, but there is one clear theme: it is not sufficient for us to simply grant the money; we must also hand over the power. Learning to do so effectively and gracefully is crucial to our shared success.

FARHAD EBRAHIMI is the founder and chair of the Chorus Foundation, which works for a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States. The Chorus Foundation supports communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy to build new bases of political, economic, and cultural power for systemic change. Farhad serves on the boards of the Democracy Alliance and the Wildfire Project. He lives in Brooklyn.


MARIELLA



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All Communities Deserve Environmental Advocates

BY KARINA HERRERA
2017 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SEAS/EGA FELLOW

Growing up in California's Central Valley meant I have been surrounded by an abundance of fruits. My family's backyard alone has orange, grapefruit, and plum trees… and apricots if we count some of our neighbor's leaning branches. But I also grew up thinking it was normal to have air pollution levels so high we couldn't have recess outdoors. I became interested in environmental science because the Central Valley has no shortage of environmental problems, but never strongly associated these problems to broader social justice issues prevalent in the Central Valley. The Central Valley is composed of many low income, predominantly Latino and Southeast Asian communities who are dependent on agriculture as a source of income, while simultaneously suffering from agriculture's pesticide and fertilizer water contamination.

Diving into environmental engineering as an undergraduate, I worked with communities in developing countries lacking access to potable water. We created solutions from technology already available. It was a matter of connecting communities to resources they lacked. The lack of resources and technology was apparent within a developing world context. Living in an American city with an appearance of modernity with water treatment facilities and an expected abundance of water, I have struggled to learn about communities less than hour away lacking access to clean water. But it is estimated that one million people in California do not have access to clean water. Some of these rural agricultural communities lack the resources to operate a water treatment facility. The lack of access to clean water is indubitably connected to public health problems and low incomes.

This summer as an Environmental Fellow I interned at the William Penn Foundation. Part of their Watershed Protection funding strategy considers how environmental work can be done to generate the most impactful change. Looking into the future of environmental philanthropy, impactful environmental change requires the engagement of all communities in environmental work. This includes reducing socioeconomic barriers that prevent communities from being involved in environmental stewardship and making the connection between social inequities, public health, and the environment. As we push for environmental change, communities critically affected by environmental issues, including low income and people of color communities, need to be given the resources and technology to be their own advocates for environmental change.

KARINA HERRERA is a graduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science specializing in Water Resources Management. Before graduate school, Karina served as an AmeriCorps member engaging Fresno State undergraduates in science and mathematics in research and internship opportunities and managing a volunteer program to increase early education literacy rates in the Fresno Unified School District. Her interests include groundwater quality and management, sustainable development, and environmental justice.

Bridges or Wedges? Reflections on EGA's Thirtieth Anniversary

BY MARK VAN PUTTEN

Celebrating EGA's 30th anniversary prompts mixed feelings. Reflecting on EGA's organizational progress and prospects, there is ample cause for celebration and optimism. But, environmental funders' success ultimately must be measured by conservation and environmental progress, and these prospects (for the time being) are murky if not gloomy.

As EGA board chair, I'll risk myopia in reflecting on three key challenges for EGA's future organizational success.

First, EGA should embrace the changing face of philanthropy. EGA's membership must accommodate evolving and different forms of philanthropy—donor-advised funds, individual givers, corporate donors, etc.—while assuring a shared commitment to EGA's mission and to genuine collaboration. Some of the organizational issues implicated by different forms of philanthropy were addressed in EGA's 2012 membership restructuring, but important questions remain. Also, EGA must welcome a new generation of philanthropists domestically and continue to engage more deeply with emerging philanthropy globally.

Second, EGA should double down on diversity. EGA's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion must be perpetual, despite our pride in specific accomplishments. In recent years, progress has been marked by the diversity of EGA's programming, partnering with Dr. Dorceta Taylor in launching the Environmental Fellows program and designating up to three board seats for nonmember organizations to bring diversity from outside into our organization—as well as cultivating it from within. And, while tallying representation is an incomplete measure, EGA can be proud of achieving a "majority minority" board. But, we must remain relentless in taking more and different steps to remake EGA and help EGA members transform their institutions and grantees, notwithstanding the opposition it may engender.

Finally, EGA should nurture a variety of views about how to achieve a just, healthy and sustainable future for our planet's inhabitants (including for our nonhuman sojourners). EGA has a critical role as a venue for voices that challenge the prevailing preconceptions of our members and reveal possibilities for deeper understanding and, possibly, even collaboration with unlikely allies—including faith-based institutions, free-market proponents, corporations, rural communities and political conservatives to name a few. EGA should lead by example in countering our society's current discourse that is scarred by incivility, groupthink, closed-mindedness and, even, hatred and violence. Civil engagement is as important as civic engagement.

Fundamentally, the philosophical and strategic tension for EGA and for each of its members is between advancing environmental concerns as a *bridge* between otherwise divergent viewpoints or deploying them as a *wedge* in combat between competing ideologies. Practically, EGA's signature retreats and convenings are at best a waste of time and at worst a disservice if they merely confirm prevailing views on causes and solutions to environmental crises.

Perhaps, the most important touchstone of success over EGA's past thirty years has been a willingness to examine the shortcomings and animating tensions of the environmental movement, including philanthropy. Freed from grantees' burden of day-to-day execution, EGA members have the luxury of strategic introspection that can lead to more effective action. Our most compelling challenge for the future is to not squander this opportunity.

MARK VAN PUTTEN is President of the Wege Foundation. Previously, Mark was President of Conservation Strategy and served for 21 years on the staff of National Wildlife Federation, including as President and CEO. He is a graduate magna cum laude of and served as a Public Service/Public Interest Law Fellow at the University of Michigan Law School. On the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, he was named one of 30 nationwide "Clean Water Heroes."


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