

12/04/06

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEEAL Elects Board of Directors, Officers

The Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL) has elected a 19-member Board of Directors and is seeking funds to hire an Executive Director.

In the past three months, SEEAL has been hard at work electing an executive board, committees, and a general board of 19 individuals to head the organization. The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts is fiscal agent for SEEAL and provides technical assistance.

“Our main focus is to secure funding and to hire a director to help manage SEEAL,” said Jennifer Marshall, Outreach Coordinator for the Westport River Watershed Alliance and interim SEEAL coordinator. “This will help us push forward as the premier advocate for environmental education in the region.”

The Executive Board that was elected includes Linton Harrington of The Trustees of Reservations, President; Joe Yarmac, Fairhaven Public Schools, 1st Vice President; Jack Crowley, UMass Dartmouth Center for University and School Partnerships (CUSP), 2nd Vice President; Shelli Perry, Westport River Watershed Alliance, Treasurer; and Sarah Van Vleck, Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies, Secretary. Program Officer Gabrielle Simmons is the liaison for the Community Foundation. Ms. Marshall is the interim SEEAL Coordinator.

Additional Board Members elected include Diane Berube, Friends of Buttonwood Park; Ben Bryant, Coalition for Buzzards Bay; Avijit Gangopadhyay, UMass Dartmouth SMAST; Dierdre Heally, UMass Dartmouth Community Service Program; Annie McDowell, Schooner Ernestina; Marion O'Brien, Dartmouth Public Schools; Gina Purtell, Allen's Pond Wildlife Sanctuary; Bob Rocha, Whaling Museum; Nancy Santoro, Trips for Kids; Trish Sheppard, Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies; Jane Souza, CONNECT; Cynthia Spence, Whaling City Rowing.

SEEAL was formed under the auspices of the Community Foundation in 1997, thanks to funding from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, The Henry H. Crapo Foundation and Polaroid. SEEAL's initial goal was to provide environmental educational experiences to young people of New Bedford with a special focus on New Bedford Harbor, but has since expanded its sights to encompass the watersheds of Buzzards Bay and parts of the Taunton River watershed in Southeastern Massachusetts.

SEEAL currently has 31 member organizations, including the Lloyd Center for Environmental Learning, the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies, UMass Dartmouth, the Westport River Watershed Alliance, the New Bedford Oceanarium; the Woods Hole Research Center; and the Friends of Buttonwood Park.

According to UMass CUSP's Jack Crowley, SEEAL was formed in the 1990s when there was a big push statewide emanating from the Governor's office to encourage environmental education and stewardship. The Commonwealth Secretary of Environmental Affairs' Advisory Group included a SouthCoast liaison, which led to the organization of SEEAL, Mr. Crowley said.

About the Community Foundation

Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible. CFSEMA is a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern – improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.

To date, the Community Foundation has assets of more than \$15 million and has distributed over \$4.4 million from 66 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. For more information about SEEAL go to www.cfsema.org/programs_services/seeal.htm.

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