

ANNUAL Report 2018

Through a number of activities, the Communication and Engagement (C&E) Section works toward 1) professionalizing science communication and engagement efforts within and beyond ESA, and 2) providing mentorship to ecologists interested in communication and engagement or transitioning to careers in science communication.

Membership

The Communication and Engagement Section has 144 members on our official member roster as of our most recent report from ESA (June 19, 2019).

Section Leadership

- **Elected Officers:**
 - The 2018-2019 officers were Annaliese Hettinger (Chairperson), Kirsten Schwarz (Chairperson-elect), Jennifer Purrenhage (Secretary), and Bethann Garramon Merkle (Past Chairperson).
 - The 2019-2020 officers will be Kirsten Schwarz (Chairperson), Robert Newman (Chairperson-elect), and Skylar Bayer (Secretary).
- **Student Section Liaison:** In 2017 we established a Student Section Liaison position. Emily Whalen served as our first Student Section Liaison and will continue to serve through 2019 and into 2020.
- **Policy Section Liaison:** In 2018 we established a Policy Section Liaison position that is currently held by Skylar Bayer.
- **Additional member roles:** To more fully engage section members and increase our capacity as a Section, we operate with several appointed positions. The current additional roles focus on Social Media and Blog Peer Review.

Governance

In lieu of a business meeting at ESA 2018 in New Orleans, we opted to hold a [virtual business meeting](#) on December 6, 2018. Our objective was to make this meeting accessible to members who may not have been able to attend if we held the meeting during ESA 2018. The business meeting was as well-attended as past business meetings at Annual Meetings. Future annual Section business meetings will be held in September,

allowing the Section to introduce new officers, provide updates on ESA Annual Meeting activities, and plan for the upcoming year.

Long Range Planning Grants (LRPG) and Major Initiatives

In Fall 2018, the Section received a LRPG to support two activities that promote and support engaging local communities with science during ESA annual meetings. Specifically, we were awarded funds to support the full cost of registration for four representatives from local organizations to present in a *Building Scientist-Community Partnerships* workshop. That workshop was not selected for the program, and thus funds were approved to be diverted to support non-member participation at the Annual Meeting through two other activities: 1) *Earth Stewardship Initiative* and 2) *Improving Environmental Decision-Making Through Integrated Governance, Public Engagement, and Translational Approaches* symposium. We were also allocated funds to convene a working group during the ESA 2019 Annual Meeting focused on how to institutionalize community engagement activities around future ESA annual meetings. This Discussion Luncheon, [Cultivating a Culture of Community Engagement at ESA Annual Meetings](#), is open to all ESA 2019 Annual Meeting attendees.

In Spring 2019, the Section received a second LRPG to support the establishment of two new communication and engagement awards: 1) *Communication and Engagement in Practice Award* and 2) *Communication and Engagement Best Poster Award*. These awards will recognize the intellectual, scientific, and civic contributions made by current ESA members active in public engagement and science communication. The LRPG funds will support the first five years of the program.

Website

The C&E Section website is located at: www.esa.org/communication-engagement. The website provides current information about the ESA Annual Meeting, Section information, and a number of [curated resources](#) to help ecologists refine and develop their communication skills. Topics covered include science writing, audio/visual, graphic design, drawing and sketching, and photography. We also produce and host communication and engagement resources, including three blog series:

- [#MySciComm series](#) – The #MySciComm Series explores the personal and professional journeys of science communicators, including the joys, struggles, and helpful resources that surfaced along their way. #MySciComm also showcases the wide range of types of SciComm that people can do, from photography and illustration to serving as an institutional press officer, doing public engagement research, and so much more.
- [SciComm Lit Review series](#) – This is a series reviewing books and other scicomm resources. Reviews provide unique content about literature that has direct or indirect relevance to the wide range of scicomm careers, approaches, and interests of Section members. [See contributor guidelines here](#).
- [Resource of the Week series](#) – We post a single link and brief synopsis, once a week, highlighting a resource for science communication and engagement;

includes websites, books, blog posts, and other resources. ESA members are encouraged to contact us directly to share resources they would like to highlight.

In 2018-2019, we published 87 posts, including 54 weekly scicomm resources, 2 scicomm lit reviews, and 10 guest posts in our #MySciComm series.

Resources

In addition to the website-based resources listed above, we maintain a Facebook Group: [ESA Communication and Engagement Section](#) and regularly update the [#scicommjob hashtag](#) on Twitter. The Section also posts on Twitter via officer accounts using the hashtags #ESASciComm and #EngageESA. In November 2018 we started a Twitter account for the Section [@ESA_SciComm](#) and have reached nearly 400 followers.

Newsletter

We send out a monthly email newsletter to highlight Section news, communication and engagement resources available online, highlights from our blog, and more. You may [subscribe](#) to email updates and [view the newsletter archive](#).

Annual Meeting

Each year, we host a range of workshops, special sessions, and informal social activities. We also maintain a list of [SciComm/engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion activities and sessions hosted by others](#) at annual ESA meetings.

2018 Annual Meeting

The 2018 ESA Annual Meeting in New Orleans provided an excellent opportunity to help organize and participate in many scicomm- and engagement-related sessions. [Here](#) are details on the 39+ sessions our Section officers and/or members contributed to the Annual Meeting program. We also hosted our first joint-mixer (with the Policy Section and the Union of Concerned Scientists) which was well-attended and provided a great opportunity for networking.

In 2018 we were booth neighbors with the Policy Section which allowed for the initiation of several ongoing collaborations between the two sections. Our fourth annual #SketchYourScience activity was a hit and attracted hundreds of new potential members. We also introduced ESA members to the new, ESA member-driven [Plant Love Stories project](#). Our 2017 LRPG helped to fund promotional material that was unveiled at the 2018 Annual Meeting, including two vinyl banners and postcards all with original artwork by Bethann Garramon Merkle. All of this material will be used at future Annual Meetings for the recruitment of new members, and to share science communication and engagement resources with ESA members and other ESA Annual Meeting attendees.

2019 Annual Meeting

The C&E Section will co-host our 2nd Annual [Joint Networking Mixer](#) with the Policy Section, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and - new to the mixer - the Urban Ecosystem Section. We will also host a discussion, [Cultivating a Culture of Community](#)

[Engagement at ESA Annual Meetings](#), with support from the 2018 LRPG program. All Section-related sessions and activities planned for ESA 2019 are [listed on our website](#).

Submitted by:

Annaliese Hettinger, Chairperson

Kirsten Schwarz, Chairperson-elect

Jennifer Purrenhage, Secretary

Bethann Garramon Merkle, Past Chairperson