

Trustee Profile



Name: J. Eric Smith

Employer: Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund

Position: President and Chief Executive Officer

Education: B.S., Political Science, United States Naval Academy
M.A., Public Affairs and Policy, University at Albany

Skills: Executive Leadership, Fundraising, Communications and Public Relations, Strategic Planning, Management, Writing and Editing, Advocacy, Operations Development, and System Implementation.

Why you are serving on TREE Fund board? I was hired to serve as TREE Fund's President and Chief Executive Officer in 2015, and serve as a non-voting, *ex officio* Trustee in this capacity. As a city dweller, and avid urban explorer, and a lover of green spaces, I have been a life-long beneficiary of the tree care industry's contributions to the health and beauty of our urban and community forests. I enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to support the professionals in this industry as they work to address the challenges posed by climate change, invasive species, urbanization, and other dynamic social and scientific processes. There are few things more powerful than knowledge, and I believe that the types of primary research and education programs that the TREE Fund makes possible can and should be widely communicated and leveraged to benefit as many communities, businesses, citizens and industries as possible.

TREE Fund Committees You Chair or Serve On: I support all TREE Fund committees in my role as President and Chief Executive Officer.

Biography: J. Eric Smith is a skilled professional manager with over 30 years of leadership experience in the public sector. The South Carolina native is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, the Naval Supply Corps School, and the University at Albany. He served for ten years with the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, first as an active duty Naval Supply Corps Officer, then as a civilian employee of the U.S. Department of Energy. Since leaving Federal service, Eric has worked in the nonprofit sector as a fundraising professional, communications and public relations director, operations manager and chief executive officer. Eric has also had an extensive career as a freelance writer in both traditional print and digital media, and since 1995 has maintained a vibrant online presence of both creative and professional writing at jericsmith.com. He lives in downtown Chicago, overlooking the city's "forever open, free and clear" lake front park district, and has been married to healthcare attorney Marcia Brom Smith since 1989. Marcia and Eric are the proud parents of Katelin Smith, a human resources professional in Des Moines, Iowa.