

April 2026

SLI Newsletter



**Sustainable
Libraries
Initiative**

The latest news and updates from the Sustainable Libraries Initiative



Sustainable Libraries Initiative Awarded \$175,000 for *Operationalizing Community Resilience: Creating a Training and Partnership Model for Libraries*

**SLI Awarded
\$175,000 Grant for
“Operationalizing
Community Resilience:
Creating a Training and
Partnership Model for
Libraries”**

**Check out our press release
for more information:**

SUSTAINABLELIBRARIESINITIATIVE.ORG

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) has been awarded a \$175,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation’s Public Knowledge program to lead a 15-month project titled *Operationalizing Community Resilience: Creating a Training and Partnership Model for Libraries*. The grant will be administered by Educopia, SLI’s fiscal sponsor.

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative (founded in 2015 and now housed within the Suffolk Cooperative Library System) supports library leaders in co-creating libraries and communities that can thrive in the face of climate change. Through its online community of practice, professional development programs, and award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program, SLI empowers those working in public, academic, and school libraries to advance environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic feasibility.

Operationalizing Community Resilience will pilot a training program designed to support public library staff in smaller and rural communities as they plan and implement locally relevant resilience activities in partnership with community-based organizations. The training will help participating libraries integrate the National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries (NCASL) into their daily operations, bridging national climate frameworks with the realities of local library work.

The pilot will train a total of 40 staff members drawn from 40 public libraries serving populations of 25,000 or fewer. Project outcomes will include:

- Up to 40 library-led initiatives addressing climate mitigation or adaptation
- Stronger partnerships between libraries and local organizations focused on climate preparedness
- A scalable, field-tested training model and curriculum, and stories from the field, to help inspire more libraries to engage in similar work nationwide

Together, these outcomes position libraries as trusted, place-based knowledge institutions capable of anchoring climate adaptation efforts and supporting equitable access to public knowledge infrastructure.

“The goal of *Operationalizing Community Resilience* is to equip small and rural public libraries with the tools, partnerships, and confidence to turn climate strategy into action,” said SLI Co-Founder and President, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich. “With Mellon’s support, we’re building a practical and replicable model that recognizes libraries as essential civic infrastructure in times of climate disruption.”

By grounding the NCASL in locally driven, partnership-based initiatives, the project contributes a field-building approach to community-based climate action.

The project team will be led by SLI treasurer Roger Reyes and SLI coordinator Rebecca T. Miller, with key contributions from SLI co-founders Rebekkah Smith Aldrich and Matthew Bollerman, and WebJunction’s Andrew Harbison.

WebJunction, which brings deep expertise in designing and delivering national-scale training, will play a central role in delivering a high-quality program.

The project's advisory group will include AnnaLee Dragon (New York Library Association), Julianna Robbins (California State Library), and Michelle Eberle (Massachusetts Library System), and a representative from a Midwest library association, as well as Kate Laughlin (Association for Rural & Small Libraries).

Educopia, a nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting diverse knowledge communities with resources, power, and each other, serves as fiscal sponsor for the project. "The Sustainable Libraries Initiative's work exemplifies the kind of cross-sector collaboration Educopia exists to support," said Jessica Meyerson, Co-Director - Fiscal Sponsorship, Educopia. "This Mellon Foundation grant represents a critical investment in translating a national climate framework into on-the-ground action for smaller and rural libraries."

Through *Operationalizing Community Resilience*, the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and its partners are creating durable pathways for climate action within the library ecosystem, ensuring that supporting community resilience becomes an integral, sustained priority of these essential public institutions.

[Read the press release on our website](#)



Member Spotlight

Name: University of Maine Libraries

Location: Orono, Maine

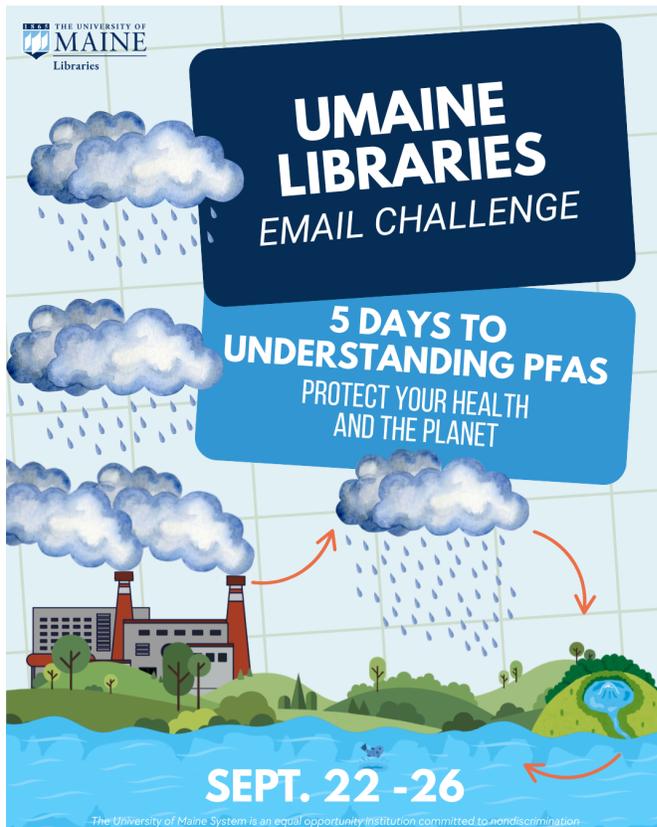
Membership: SLCP Academic Library



In Fall of 2025, UMaine Libraries hosted a sustainability-themed email challenge focused on PFAs, often called "forever chemicals." The challenge ran from

September 22 through September 25 and delivered a series of short, daily emails to participants.

Each message included curated resources on PFAs and invited participants to explore optional, self-directed activities, such as following related social media tags and engaging with suggested materials.



This initiative was part of UMaine Libraries' ongoing series of topical email challenges, which have previously addressed subjects such as artificial intelligence and grant-seeking. The PFAs challenge was developed and coordinated by Christopher Clark, Science Reference Librarian and Meg Colbert, Assistant Dean of Libraries.

The challenge was organized into five thematic sections over five days covering: what

PFAs are and how they are defined; their potential health impacts and common points of exposure; their environmental effects; strategies for reducing personal exposure; and advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national levels. The format offered a low-barrier, high-impact way for community members to engage with a complex topic at their own pace.

While the primary emphasis was on library-curated resources, including academic articles and research guides, the challenge also highlighted work from other University of Maine units focused on sustainability and PFAs, such as the Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

The email challenge was well received and generated positive feedback from students, faculty, and staff across the University of Maine community. And if you

missed the challenge in September, no worries! The entirety of the challenge is still available to the public and can be accessed in this guide on the Fogler Library website.

UMaine: PFAS Email Challenge

Want to be featured? Complete the submissions form!



SLI Updates

HARRIS
COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Read on Library
Journal

Harris County Public Library Wins *Library Journal* Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize

Sustainable Library Certification Program member Harris County Public Library has been awarded with the Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize. The \$250,000 prize was developed in partnership between the Gerald M. Kline Family Foundation and Library Journal and is awarded each year to a public library doing outstanding and impactful work for its local community.

Certified School
Librarian Melissa King

Featured in *Nature*

Forward

Melissa King, the first school librarian in Maryland to be certified by the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, has been featured for her extraordinary sustainability work in an article by Nature Forward: an organization with a mission to inspire residents of the greater Washington, DC region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy.



[Read the article](#)



[Read the column](#)

New *Library Journal* Column by President Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

SLI President Rebekkah Smith Aldrich recently published a column titled "Onward... | Sustainability" in *Library Journal*. The motivating article breaks down the importance of focusing on sustainability during ongoing challenges in the library profession. Read more below.

Upcoming Conferences

Maryland and Delaware Library Association Joint Annual Conference

- May 6-8
- Cambridge, Maryland

Join SLI board members Lisa Kropp and Jennifer Ferris for *Stories of Sustainability: How Libraries Lead Climate Action in Their Communities* on Wednesday, May 6th from 9am-12pm.

We're also exhibiting! Come have a conversation with SLI staff and learn more about our organization in the exhibit hall!

Maine Library Association Annual Conference

- May 18-19
- Waterville, Maine

Stay tuned for more information on a program session presented by SLI President and Co-founder Rebekkah Smith Aldrich on May 18th.

We're also exhibiting! Come have a conversation with SLI staff and learn more about our organization in the exhibit hall!

Massachusetts Library Association Annual Conference

- May 18-19
- Danvers, Massachusetts

Join SLI advisory board member Hazel Onsrud and SLI members Emily Smith and Abigail Porter for *Sustainability in Modern Librarianship: Practical Actions for Community Impact* on Tuesday, May 19th at 2:25pm.

We're also exhibiting! Come have a conversation with SLI staff and learn more about our organization at booth #5!

Sustainable Book Disposal: Help us Build Our Resources!

The SLI is looking to improve on its resources! If your library uses any book recycling vendors or has innovative methods of sustainable book disposal please fill out the form below.

[Suggestion Form](#)



Member News

We welcome our new members to the Sustainable Libraries Initiative! Thank you for joining our community of practice and demonstrating your commitment to making the world a better place. We're happy to have you!

Sustainable Library Certification Program Members:



White Lake Community Library
Whitehall, Michigan

Sustainable Libraries Initiative Members:

Public Libraries:

- Belmont Literary & Historical Society Free Library

- Belmont, New York
- Lowville Free Library
 - Lowville, New York
- St. James Parish Library
 - Litcher, Louisiana
- Ypsilanti District Library
 - Ypsilanti, Michigan

Personal Membership:

- Nancy Sampson
 - Potomac, Maryland

Get involved!



For Your Calendar

April SLCP Meetup: Collections

April 9, 2026 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time

Register

May SLCP Meetup: Final Presentation

May 14, 2026 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time

Register

June SLCP Meetup: Getting Started

Register

June 4, 2026 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time

July SLCP Meetup: Outdoor Spaces

Register

July 2, 2026 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time



Print Releaf empowers Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP) members to offset the paper and fiber-based materials consumption of your library in order to sustain and grow our global forestry system. SLCP members can [submit paper purchases here!](#)

Thanks to the SLI's partnership with CCP Solutions, SLCP members have collectively offset the equivalent of **30.45 million** letter pages of paper consumption by reforesting **3.65K trees**.

Keep up the good work!

Check out CCP!



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**Sustainable
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Initiative**

www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.com

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