

ERIC ELLMAN

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

A life-long trailblazer in creatively financed environmental education and community development efforts. Proven success at conceptualizing and securing funding for headline-making projects meriting national and international news coverage. Secured circa \$2MM in grants for innovative projects on both sides of the Atlantic.

EXPERIENCE (England)

US STATE DEPARTMENT DIPLOMACY GRANT

Jan 2023

Fulfilled a £40,000 grant that forged relationships between leading climate change researchers and London's spoken word community. Methodology developed and shared for Sixth Form teachers and their students with the prize-winning performances taking place at [an event in Hackney Wick](#).

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY GRANT

Aug 2021

Fulfilled a £10,000 outreach grant from the Royal Society of Chemistry to facilitate dialogue between climate scientists and London creatives, producing original [scientifically informed climate change theatre](#).

SAINSBURYS "STUMPERY"

Jul 2021

Mid-pandemic, used £800 from Ballymore Construction to develop the [Sainsbury's "Stumpery"](#), an outdoor performance area adjacent to the Grand Union Canal.

RBKC ARTS SCHEME GRANT

May 2021

Pioneered work on £2,000 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Arts Scheme Grant to develop [climate change-related theatre](#) in partnership with SPID Theatre and climate change researchers at Universities of Bristol and Birmingham.

YOUR CANAL BOAT

2020 - present

- Set up [Your Canal Boat](#) in January 2020 to identify and activate underutilised canalside locations.
- February 2020, launched "Cosy Concerts" on the canal boat Molly Anna, allowing buskers an opportunity to curate their own two-person shows and share revenue from ticket sales with Bards on Boats.
- Introduced historical walking tours of Kensal Green Cemetery, and "Intro to Nautical Life" [sessions with Al Amanaah Supplementary School for families and individuals](#).
- May 2021, successfully Crowdfunded £5,000 to launch "[Brigadoon](#)", a floating market, inspired by the mythical Scottish Highland village that appears every 100 years. Brigadoon appeared at new locations every two weeks along London's canals.
- August 2021, fulfilled a £5,000 grant from to identify and activate previously unutilized canal side locations in West London, including a [tribute to Mary Seacole at Mary Seacole Gardens](#).
- July 2023, "Building Dialogues", [a Westway Trust funded intervention](#) that convened borough government, private developers and residents with architects to guide design and eventual construction of London's first all-weather canalside community space.

BUSKERS' CAFÉ**2019**

Set up the [Buskers Café](#) after a Public Space Protection Order banned amplified music on Portobello Road. Worked with the Musicians Union and Keep Streets Live to convert the patio of Union Tavern in Ladbroke Grove into a showcase for buskers and an opportunity to test a new cashless payment system.

BARDS ON BOATS**2016**

Setup www.bardsonboats.com, providing a floating venue for music, theatre and workshops as a tool to spark interest in underutilised canalside locations.

EXPERIENCE (USA)

RUCKUS ON THE RÍO**2016**

- A U.S. election year effort to use music and cultural exchange to foster a different understanding of life on the Rio Grande.

YALE CLIMATE AND ENERGY INSTITUTE (YCEI) - Communications Director**2013 – 2016**

- Developed creative partnerships to raise the YCEI visibility within and beyond Yale.
- Set up an internship program with the City of New Haven, involving contributors from different fields and special events, to promote the synergy between diverse faculty.
- Responsibility for managing the website, and social media, design publicity as well as facilitating meetings and reporting to YCEI directorate and Steering Committee.

BIG RIVER FOUNDATION – Chairman**2010 – 2015**

- Jointly set up the Big River Foundation to address the challenges of sustainable community development on rivers that constitute international borders.
- Secured funding to support community-based programs that promote environmental stewardship around the world, working on the Rio Teribe in Costa Rica, Panama, and the Rio Grande in the U.S. and Mexico.
- Set up annual river festivals and standalone outfitting companies in every county along the Lower Rio Grande, including establishing Texas as the United States' wintertime capital for canoe and kayak racing.
- Recruited, trained and managed payroll for Laredo-area adults to become river guides and environmental mentors to local youth.

LOS CAMINOS DEL RIO - Executive Director**2005 – 2010**

- Successfully modified the Rensselaerville Institute's "Sparkplug" model of community-based development to cultural heritage preservation, restored vigour to a moribund 15-year-old non-profit.
- Incorporated ecotourism and health and wellbeing projects into the established mission of Los Caminos del Rio, securing \$200,000 in new funding from the Meadows Foundation that launched the group in 1991.
- Prompted Henry Cuellar (US-Congressman) to propose House Resolution 2167 to provide funding for designating the U.S. side of the border as the Caminos del Rio National Heritage Area.
- Established legal basis and government support to design and stage [binational paddle sports events on the Rio Grande](#). Events grew from 40 competitors and \$2,000 in prize money, to 200 competitors and \$30,000 in total cash awards. Profiled in USA Today, the New York Times, [National Geographic](#), Wall Street Journal and [National Public Radio](#).
- Created the [McCANALenburg Classic Bike Rides and Race](#) to celebrate the historic irrigation canals of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, demonstrating their year-round utility as an alternative transportation network between two of the regions fastest-growing cities.

THE RENSSLAERVILLE INSTITUTE - Community Sparkplugs Program Director **2000 – 2004**

- Identified "Sparkplugs" in Rio Grande colonias, and coached them to organize neighbors to design, fund and build their own first-time water and wastewater services.
- Secured a \$900,000 Environmental Protection Agency grant to demonstrate alternative wastewater treatment and reuse systems where traditional sewerage was impractical, in some of the poorest counties in the United States.
- Used a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grant to create the [Outtasight Songbirders Tournament](#), a paradigm setting bird watching competition for the blind.

GIFTS4THEWORLD - President **1999 - 2000**

Followed up on a Border Environmental Cooperation Commission grant that used treated effluent from purpose-built wetlands to grow gourds as raw material for a bird house building company staffed by inmates of the Agua Prieta, Sonora prison.

FUNDRAISING

- **2011:** \$66,000: US EPA Border 2012, "Hands-on recycling, composting, native plants propagation for Laredo schools"
- **2011:** \$30,000: Consortium of public and private sources. Used as prize money to attract the world's best marathon canoe and kayak racers to Laredos Riofest 2011.
- **2011:** \$5,000: Webb County, Texas. To Big River Foundation to continue demonstrating the resource potential of the Rio Grande.
- **2011:** \$11,000: City of Laredo, Texas. To demonstrate the resource potential of the Rio Grande.
- **2011:** \$38,000: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. For "Field Trips to Go!", to facilitate hands-on outdoor learning for Laredo school children.
- **2010:** \$10,000: Border Environmental Cooperation Commission. For "Urban Waters Outdoor Learning Initiative"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- US passport
- Masters degree, Hydrology and Water Resources Science – University of Arizona, 1991-1995
- Co-authored a 300-page bicycle guide to Mexico ([Bicycling Mexico. Hunter Publishing. 1990](#)), along with numerous travel features for the Los Angeles Times, New York Newsday, Miami Post, Denver Post, Bicycling, Climbing, Canoe & Kayak, Travel Agent and numerous other national newspapers and magazines.
- Bachelor's degree, Geology – University of Colorado Boulder, 1980-1984