GET INVOLVED IN PLANETARY SCIENCE EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH. Dr. Stephanie Shipp¹, Ms. Heather Dalton¹, Dr. Emily CoBabe-Amman², Ms. Alice Wessen³, Mr. Don Boonstra⁴, Mr. John Ristvey⁵, and Dr. Dawn Mackety⁵, ¹Lunar and Planetary Institute (3600 Bay Area Boulevard, Houston, TX 77058, shipp@lpi.usra.edu), ²Emily A. CoBabe & Associates, Inc. (ecobabe@spaceeducation.org), ³JPL (alice.s.wessen@ipl.nasa.gov), ⁴Sustainability Schools Consulting, LLC (DonBoonstra@comcast.net), ⁵Midcontinent Research for Education and Learning (jristvey@mcrel.org, dmackety@mcrel.org).

The Planetary Science Education and Public Outreach (E/PO) Forum supports the Science Mission Directorate’s (SMD) Planetary Science Division research and education community.

The Forum’s role is to engage, support, and extend the community of E/PO professionals and scientists involved in planetary science education activities by ensuring information and opportunities are shared with this community. Through communications, online interactions, and meetings, the Forum facilitates opportunities for community members to communicate, collaborate, leverage existing programs and partnerships, and become more skilled education practitioners.

Working closely with the Forums are four audience-based working Groups: Higher Education, Formal Education, Informal Education, and Outreach. These Working Groups interact with the audiences to build an understanding of their needs and how SMD E/PO efforts may be developed or leveraged to efficiently and effectively provide support. The inclusion of Higher Education adds a new dimension to the SMD E/PO portfolio. In the near term, efforts will focus on identifying the needs of higher education faculty and students involved in planetary science – and related disciplines - teaching and learning. In the coming years there will be opportunities for the development of products and activities that support planetary science higher education.

Over the next five years, the Forum will work with the community and SMD to develop thematic educational approaches, allowing mission and other educational activities to be placed in the context of the overarching concepts of planetary science. Concurrent with this activity, the Forum will assist in the review of SMD’s portfolio of education products and activities, helping to strengthen these resources and identify portfolio needs. The reviewed products and activities will be integrated into a single online resource easily accessible to intended audiences. Finally, the Planetary Science E/PO Forum will collaborate with SMD and the Astrophysics, Heliophysics, and Earth Sciences E/PO forums to identify opportunities to integrate science division E/PO activities into cross-divisional and NASA wide initiatives.

There are numerous paths available for planetary researchers and E/PO professionals to become more involved in SMD E/PO, from participating in ongoing activities, to augmenting research projects with E/PO supplements, to proposing through the Education and Public Outreach Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences. Interested individuals should contact the Planetary Science Forum to learn about opportunities for involvement.