



## Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation (AERF) - Leadership Announcement



**Jim Petta**  
**New Executive Director**

We would like to announce some changes to the AERF leadership team: After 22 years as Executive Director, Carlton Layne will be stepping down effective July 1, 2026. Jim Petta will step in to fill his very big shoes. However, Carlton will remain active in support of AERF and aquatics for the foreseeable future.

Jim returns to AERF as a former president of the foundation and former board member, including as one of the founding members of the foundation. Jim comes to AERF with extensive experience in aquatics and invasive species management including former president of APMS in 2007-8. Jim began his career as a researcher in Agriculture after completing his BS in Entomology from Texas A&M followed by his MS in Agriculture from California State University where he completed his graduate work in flooded rice, working with many aquatic species. His active involvement directly in aquatics began when he managed the introduction of multiple important management tools including Reward, Clipper, and Tradewind herbicides. More importantly, Jim has been very active in sustainable solutions and in forming consensus for managing invasive and problem plant and insect species in various markets around the world.

“Coming into AERF allows me to give back to the industry so important to all of us. I look forward to actively working throughout the country to help give aquatics the focus and support it needs for our future”. AERF is especially situated to bring together all the concerned interests in lake and water management from the Federal Agencies, State and local governments, universities, fishermen, home owners, and others to put together a long-term solution plan by getting the right data quickly, and applying it practically.

The Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation (AERF) is committed to sustainable water resources through the science of aquatic ecosystem management in collaboration with industry, academia government, and other stakeholders. The mission of the AERF, a not-for-profit foundation, is to support research and development which provides strategies and techniques for the environmentally and scientifically sound management, conservation and restoration of aquatic ecosystems. One of the ways the Foundation accomplishes the mission is by providing information to the public on the benefits of conserving aquatic ecosystems. This happens through our website, the Best Management Practices Handbook (currently in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition), as well as many other public forums such as industry conferences, interaction and aid to local, state, and federal policy makers, EPA educational field tours, and support of research to advance the protection of aquatic ecosystems.



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