

# #SEJ2024

PHILLY,  
USA

SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISTS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# DEMOCRACY, DISINFORMATION, ACTIVISM...

## WHAT'S ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM'S ROLE?



HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# SEJ Welcomes the Science, Health, and Environment Reporting Fellows



CASW | AHCJ | SEJ

National  
**Science  
Health  
Environment**  
Reporting Fellowships

Twelve journalists have been selected for the 2024 National Science-Health-Environment Reporting Fellowships (SHERF) program, now in its third year.

The 2024 fellows are:

**Alejandra Martinez**, environmental reporter, The Texas Tribune (Fort Worth, Texas)

**Allison Kite**, energy, environment, agriculture reporter, The Missouri Independent and The Kansas Reflector (Kansas City, Mo.)

**Britny Cordera**, audio reporter (Oklahoma City, Okla.)

**Dillon Bergin**, data reporter, MuckRock (Philadelphia, Pa.)

**Eli Cahan**, freelance journalist (New York, N.Y.)

**Elizabeth Rembert**, Harvest Public Media reporter, Nebraska Public Media (Omaha, Neb.)

**Ian Stevenson**, state politics and investigative reporter, The Idaho Statesman (Boise, Idaho)

**Jenae Barnes**, health and environment reporter, Capital B/Capital B Gary (Gary, Ind.)

**Jeniffer Solis**, environment and energy reporter, States Newsroom and Nevada Current (Las Vegas, Nev.)

**Mandy Nguyen**, producer, Vox (Brooklyn, N.Y.)

**Patrick Orsagos**, video journalist, Associated Press (Columbus, Ohio)

**Sarah Volpenhein**, health care reporter, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Milwaukee, Wis.)

Launched in 2021, the fellowships are a collaboration of the Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ), the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW) and the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ), with funding by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Department of Science Education and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

## SEJ Welcomes the #SEJ2024 Diversity Fellows

**Daniela Aguilar**, La Historia and Connectas.org (Ecuador)

**Eduardo Andrade**, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (Brazil)

**Erica Ayisi**, Independent Journalist (Massachusetts)

**Timmy Broderick**, Independent Journalist (New York)

**Keith Bryant**, Spectrum News (California)

**Ana Bueno**, Univision 45 (Texas)

**Yvette Cabrera**, The Center for Public Integrity (California)

**Yuen Yung Sherry Chan**, The Initium (England)

**Amber Chen**, Independent Journalist (California)

**Katherine Cheng**, Global News (Canada)

**Achref Chibani**, Independent Journalist (Tunisia)

**Tanvi Dutta Gupta**, Independent Journalist (Singapore)

**Najifa Farha**, University of Montana

**Celeste Gracia**, North Carolina Public Radio, WUNC

**Lauren Hines-Acosta**, Chesapeake Bay Journal (Texas)

**Terry Jones**, Floodlight News (Louisiana)

**Anusha Mathur**, Student (California)

**Mia Maldonado**, Idaho Capital Sun  
Anusha Mathur, Student (California)

**Marisa Meck**, WABE 90.1 (Georgia)

**Luis Joel Méndez González**, Centro de Periodismo Investigativo (Puerto Rico)

**Abdulkareem Mojeed**, Premium Times (Nigeria)

**Eman Mounir**, Independent Journalist (Egypt)

**Maria de los Angeles Ramírez Cabello**, Independent Journalist (Venezuela)

**María Ramos Pacheco**, The Dallas Morning News (Texas)

**Breanna Rittman**, WMBD/WYZZ (Illinois)

**Manola Secaira**, CapRadio NPR (California)

**Helina Selemón**, New York Amsterdam News



**Nimra Shahid**, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism; Independent Journalist (England)

**Aditi Tandon**, Mongabay (India)

**Mary Triny Zea Cornejo**, Independent Journalist (Panama)

**Amanda Zhou**, The Seattle Times (Washington)

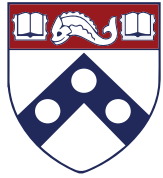
**Sushmita**, Independent Journalist (India)

**In partnership with The Uproot Project:**

The Uproot Project is a network for journalists of color who cover environmental issues, as well as students and others aspiring to cover this beat. Uproot is dedicated to advancing the careers of journalists of color who've been historically underrepresented in this field. Uproot membership is currently free for journalists of color and we encourage you to sign up.

Funding for the #SEJ2024 Diversity Travel Fellowships is provided by MacArthur Foundation, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, The Pew Charitable Trusts, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Jay Letto and Dawn Stover, Beyond Petrochemicals, Deloitte, Ocean Conservancy, Ecolab, Environmental Defense Fund, Walton Family Foundation and individual donors to SEJ.

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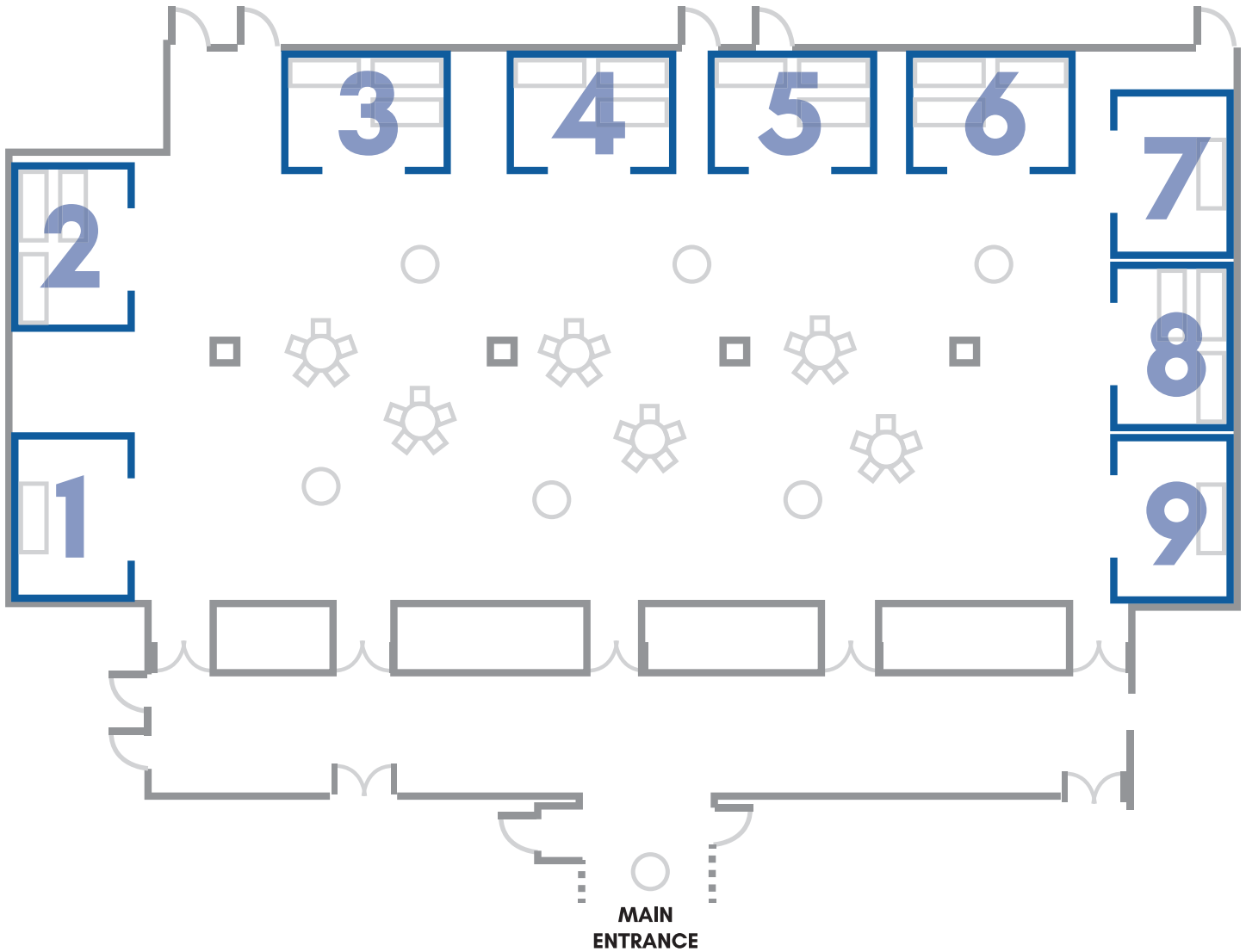
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# Welcome to Philly! #SEJ2024

We journalists from the Mid-Atlantic region have much to share with our peers across the country, not the least being the huge national battle over fracking and LNG versus renewable energy, such as wind and solar.

Come and learn about a city that wants to be modern and future facing but is held back by issues of poverty, of environmental racism, of infrastructure challenges, as well as development problems.

Still, it is a city of neighborhoods, where community gardens like Philly Herb Hub and KITHS help immigrants feel at home; where sports is a shared religion; where the past is ever present. Philadelphians have bite. They fight for access to resources they need to thrive, trees in every neighborhood to shield kids from a relentlessly hot summer, utilizing empty lots for something good (or anything at all), consistent trash pick up, for the ability to breathe outside without looking up the air quality index.

Like almost everywhere, water is an issue. Flooding and droughts are increasing. Flash flooding in neighborhoods such as Germantown, Eastwick, Manayunk and East Falls become a regular occurrence, with more intensity every year.

Philadelphia is almost at the midpoint of the Delaware River, the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi. An interstate river, wherever you stand on its shores, you're looking across at another state. It rises in New York, where New York City reservoirs on its headwaters supply about half of New York City's drinking water.

Near the border with New York, you find the battleground where local activity in the turbulent '60s defeated the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a plan — called Tocks Island — to flood the river valley for flood control and hydroelectric power. The USACE lost, just as we started celebrating Earth Day.

The river flows clean and clear between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, only as it reaches its urban core — Trenton, Philadelphia and Wilmington — it becomes more problematic.

Advocates want to see the river be welcoming and open to residents historically denied access, such as the Lenape, who are still asking the state of Pennsylvania to recognize their nation.

Problems with the Delaware not only consist of toxic pollution like PCBs and PFAS/PFOS but of old sewer systems that can get overwhelmed with heavy rain and allow sewage to get dumped into the river.

As the river widens into the Delaware Bay, the effects of sea level rise become evident, especially for the lowest-lying state, Delaware. And the communities of New Jersey's bayshore are also losing the battle.

Go west and you come to the watershed of the Chesapeake, which sprawls across six states — Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia — and the entire District of Columbia. It has its own share of problems with pollution, especially from its famed farms.



There are SO many stories — let your community help you figure out which stories demand your attention, learn how to tell them and find the support you need through the tough road that lies ahead.

Philadelphia's story reveals the potential of community resilience. As environmental journalists and as an industry at large, we should celebrate resilience but also never forget the root causes that spur community mobilization, especially given the urgency of today's climate issues.

Environmental reporters were among the first to be casualties of the fierce and unrelenting cutback in newsrooms all over the country. Once thought to be a luxury, more and more people are realizing that our reporting is essential and where once our stories may have had a 50,000-foot viewpoint (and rightly so), our stories are now in our readers' backyards.

We are witnessing history and chronicling it. We are uplifting the voices that have previously been unheard and learning from them going forward.

People have been misled by disinformation and misinformation — it's our job to cut through the chaos and help people see what's really happening. We will be focusing on the tools you need to find the truth and tell it.

And we're facing another crucial election. Pennsylvania mirrors the country — both "flanks" of the state — especially in urban Philly and Pittsburgh — lean Democratic. The rest of the state does more than lean Republican, giving us, usually, a Democratic governor and a restive Republican legislature. If the last election is an indicator of what elections will be like, eyes will be on the state and the city.

As our world begins to feel the effects of climate change in the here and now, the work we do as environmental journalists has never been more important. The network of SEJ — which you will connect with at this conference — will help you get the job done, and keep you balanced in an unbalanced world.

Your #SEJ2024 conference chair,

**Meg McGuire**, Founder/Publisher of [www.delawarecurrents.org](http://www.delawarecurrents.org),  
an online news magazine focused on the Delaware River and watershed



## AGENDA

All sessions, as well as registration, exhibits and breaks, will take place at one of the following (unless otherwise indicated):

**Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**  
3680 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Annenberg School for Communication**  
3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**  
3549 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

### Wednesday, April 3, 2024

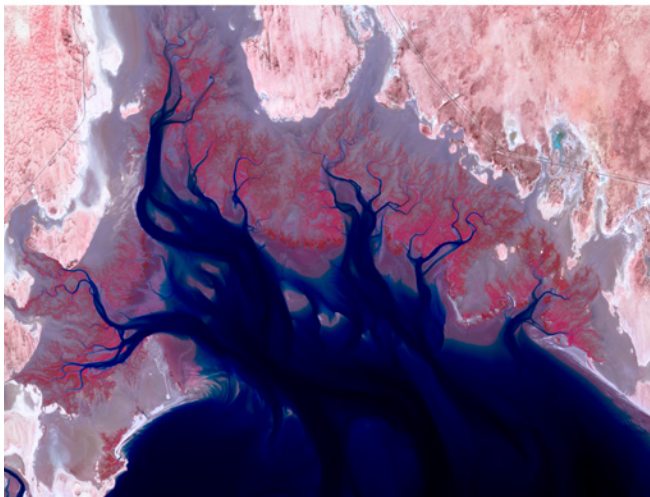
#### SEJ Registration for Workshop Participants Only

7:00 – 10:00 a.m.

**Location: Benjamin Ballroom Foyer, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This time frame is for workshop speakers and attendees only to register. Registration opens for everyone else today at 2:00 p.m. at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## All-Day Workshops

### Workshop 1.

#### Policy at a Watershed Scale: Local Lessons, Collective Solutions

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

(\$75 fee, includes breakfast and lunch)

### Location: William Penn Suite, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel

River systems connect communities across boundaries, enabling commerce and holding ecosystems together. These watersheds are increasingly threatened by climate change and pollution, yet their management is often disjointed and siloed, excluding disadvantaged voices and leading to critical gaps in environmental protection, planning and adaptation. What would it mean to manage, regulate and live with watersheds more collectively in the U.S. and beyond? At this workshop, presented by the [Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk](#), journalists will discover new ways to cover watershed-scale governance solutions, taking lessons from the Chesapeake, Delaware, Mississippi and Colorado basins and beyond. And we'll challenge the tragedy of the commons as we hear grassroots and Indigenous perspectives about communal approaches to fishing and farming. **SEJ members and journalists only. Space is limited; preregistration required.**

*Emcee:*

**Sara Shipley Hiles**, Executive Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk and Representative for the Academic Membership, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

## SCHEDULE

### Coffee/breakfast available

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

### Welcome, Introductions and Plan for the Day

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.

### Panel/Q&A 1: Beyond Extraction, Across Boundaries

8:45 – 10:15 a.m.

We'll learn from experts in major U.S. river basins about the promise and pitfalls of collective governance solutions such as multi-party compacts and restoration plans and "rights of nature" approaches – where they exist, what they can achieve and their limitations, in the context of pressures from agriculture, industry, climate change and more. We'll also interrogate the impact of voluntary measures to limit pollution and hear ideas for bringing new voices and systemic perspectives both into our coverage and into policy conversations.





*Moderator:*

**Tegan Wendland**, Editorial Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk

*Speakers:*

**Elizabeth Koebele**, Associate Professor of Political Science and Associate Director of the Graduate Program of Hydrologic Sciences, University of Nevada-Reno

**Elizabeth “Beth” Koniers Brown**, Director, External Affairs and Communications, Delaware River Basin Commission

**Kelly McGinnis**, Executive Director, Mississippi River Network

**Fred Tutman**, Patuxent Riverkeeper

**Break**

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

**Panel/Q&A 2: Challenging the Tragedy of the Commons**

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This panel will explore how the consolidation and enclosure of land and water harms ecosystems and their caretakers. The “tragedy of the commons” is often used as a basis for the privatization and top-down management of natural resources — yet this can have catastrophic impacts, as we’ve seen with corporate consolidation in agriculture and fisheries. Featuring Indigenous, grassroots and systemic perspectives, this session will explore those impacts, and uplift alternative models, including small-scale food production and community-based natural resource management in North America and beyond. Attendees will learn best practices on sourcing from on the ground, a clear understanding of the links between consolidation and environmental issues, and food for thought on how to question the status quo in environmental reporting.

*Moderator:*

**Josh To**, Producer, A Growing Culture

*Speakers:*

**Yessenia Funes**, Editor-at-Large, Atmos; Founding Member, The Uproot Project; and Columnist, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Kellyn LaCour-Conant**, Program Strategist, Climate and Ecology, Taproot Earth

**BJ McManama**, Public Relations and Web Manager, Indigenous Environmental Network

**Kermit O**, Philly-born Abolitionist Researcher and Organizer

**Jillian Waln**, Director of Storytelling, Sicangu Lakota Nation

**Feini Yin**, Freelance Journalist and Fisheries Specialist

**Lunch Talk:****Covering Identity and Policy in Two Great Watersheds**

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

In a short conversation over lunch, journalists will hear how the Ag & Water Desk’s reporting brings together policy and cultural lessons from two storied drainage basins facing similar challenges with unique approaches: the Mississippi River and Great Lakes. A reporter and editor will talk about [covering multi-state compacts in these two watersheds](#), and about findings from our [2023 study of public environmental beliefs in the Mississippi basin](#), conducted in partnership with the Missouri School of Journalism.

*Speakers:*

**Madeline Heim**, Environment Reporter, Ag & Water Desk/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

**Tegan Wendland**, Editorial Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk

**Interactive Brainstorm:****Watershed Story & System Mapping**

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Using The New School’s [Systems Thinking for Journalists approach](#), we’ll identify coverage opportunities, potentially across newsroom boundaries, that can shed light on what’s missing or disconnected in how our home watersheds are protected and managed. Journalists and experts will work in small groups to map out the forces, connections and gaps that shape key watershed issues, such as agricultural runoff and water extraction or flood adaptation and managed retreat. Once we’ve all had a chance to add ideas to others’ maps, we’ll reconvene to share what we’ve learned about the wide-ranging forces that make or break a healthy, inclusive, resilient watershed, and new ways we can tell their stories.

*Moderator:*

**Annie Ropeik**, Assistant Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk; Freelance Journalist; and Secretary, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists



## Report-Out and Wrap-Up

2:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Workshop 2.

### Combating Climate and Science Disinformation

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (\$75 fee, includes breakfast and lunch)

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 1 – 3, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Despite some major breakthroughs over the past decade that have helped the public to understand the origins of climate denial, journalists have barely scratched the surface of the complex issue of climate disinformation. In this workshop we'll look at the history of climate disinformation – before, during and after climate science denial; dig into what the disinformation problem says about the public's trust in the media and how climate journalists can rebuild that trust; talk about how exactly to cover climate disinformation – at the national and local level, across multiple industries and in ways that don't just amplify the problem; and hear from leading journalists on this beat about how particular climate disinfo stories came together and what impact they had. Plus, a lunchtime discussion with **Michael Mann**, author of "The New Climate War" and one of the climate scientists at the center of the trumped-up "ClimateGate" scandal, and **Kathleen Hall Jamieson**, author of "Cyberwar," "Creating Conspiracy Beliefs," "Democracy Amid Crisis" and numerous other books.

We'll have lots of opportunities for attendees to ask questions and follow up with our expert panelists. **SEJ members and journalists only. Space is limited; preregistration required.**

*Note: Floodlight and Drilled are conducting a deeper-dive, invite-only workshop for a smaller group of journalists on Thursday, April 4, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. This second-day workshop is not an SEJ event.*

## SCHEDULE

### Coffee/breakfast available

8:00 a.m.

### Welcome, Introductions, Questions, Set the Stage

8:30 – 8:45 a.m.

*Emcees:*

**Emily Holden**, Executive Director, Floodlight

**Amy Westervelt**, Executive Editor, DRILLED

### Session 1: How Did We Get Here? It's Not Just Big Oil!

8:45 – 10:15 a.m.

It's not just Big Oil, and the climate disinformation crisis we're dealing with today doesn't begin or end with climate science denial, either. Today's climate disinformation is part of a continuum that begins with how polluting industries shaped our concepts of the environment and the economy more than a century ago, long before anyone was worrying about global warming. Understanding that history is critical to grasping how these industries are operating today, particularly now that the fossil fuel industry in particular has moved past old-school climate science denial and onto what sociologists call "discourses of delay." In this panel we'll set the context for folks, and inspire them to widen the lens of what they might consider a climate disinformation story.

*Moderator:*

**Amy Westervelt**, Executive Editor, DRILLED

*Speakers:*

**Melissa Aronczyk**, Professor of Media Studies, Rutgers University and Co-Author, "A Strategic Nature: Public Relations and the Politics of Environmentalism"

**Jenny Splitter**, Editor-in-Chief, Sentient Media

**Geoffrey Supran**, Professor of Environmental Science & Policy and Director of Climate Accountability Lab,



University of Miami

**Itai Vardi**, Research and Communications Manager,  
Energy and Policy Institute

## Coffee break

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

## Session 2: Covering Disinformation Without Amplifying It Or Losing Audience

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

As the climate crisis intensifies, journalism about it can feel darker and darker. Facing a fear that readers might begin to tune out, one response has been to focus on more hopeful stories with a solutions focus. But doing so at the expense of illuminating major obstacles like disinformation is not in the public interest. This panel will focus on how to engage your audience while navigating the line between despair and hope. It features experts in cultivating the trust of local audiences, reimagining civic engagement and avoiding amplifying disinformation.

*Moderator:*

**Emily Holden**, Executive Director, Floodlight

*Speakers:*

**Shannon Jankowski**, Interim Sy Syms Director, U.S. Free Expression Programs, PEN America

**Phil Newell**, Associate Director, Science Defense, Climate Nexus

**Akshat Rathi**, Senior Reporter for Climate, Bloomberg News and Author, "Climate Capitalism: Winning the Global Race to Zero Emissions"

## Table Talks with Experts

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This is an opportunity for attendees to connect directly with experts from today's workshop. An expert will be stationed at each table. We will provide a few prompt questions, but the discussions will be largely self-directed.

## Fossil Fuel Industry Denial and Propaganda:

**Kert Davies**, Director of Special Investigations, Center for Climate Integrity and Founder, Climate Investigations Center

**Phil Newell**, Associate Director, Science Defense, Climate Nexus

**Geoffrey Supran**, Professor of Environmental Science & Policy and Director of Climate Accountability Lab, University of Miami

## Public Relations and Environmental Communications:

**Melissa Aronczyk**, Professor of Media Studies, Rutgers University and Co-Author, "A Strategic Nature: Public Relations and the Politics of Environmentalism"

## Utility Industry Disinformation:

**Itai Vardi**, Research and Communications Manager, Energy and Policy Institute

## Spanish-Language Misinformation Targeting Latinos:

**Elice Rojas-Cruz**, Managing Director, Climate Power En Acción

## First Amendment Issues:

**Shannon Jankowski**, Interim Sy Syms Director, U.S. Free Expression Programs, PEN America

## Climate Litigation:

**Ben Franta**, Senior Research Fellow in Climate Litigation, Oxford Sustainable Law Programme and Founding Head, Climate Litigation Lab, Oxford University

## How to Promote Your Reporting on TV/Radio:

**Liz Trotter**, Founder and Executive Director, Full Set Communications

## Retrieve Lunch

12:00 – 12:15 p.m.

## Lunchtime Session: The Intersection Between Disinformation Research and Climate Science

12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

A conversation about disinformation, climate science denial and how both have evolved over the years.



*Moderator:*

**Rick Weiss**, Director, SciLine

*Speakers:*

**Kathleen Hall Jamieson**, Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication, Annenberg School for Communication and Director, Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania

**Michael Mann**, Presidential Distinguished Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Science and Director, Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, and the Media, University of Pennsylvania

### Session 3: Covering Disinformation

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

So ... how do we cover these stories? How do we start to educate the public about the prevalence of disinformation without making them skeptical of everything (including climate experts)? What are some of the pitfalls to look out for? How do stories differ for local and national audiences? In this panel featuring a mix of national and local reporters — as well as audio, print and TV reporters — we'll get into the nuts and bolts of how to approach this beat and where reporters of all kinds might look for angles and sources.

*Moderator:*

**Miranda Green**, Director of Investigations, Floodlight

*Speakers:*

**Mario Ariza**, Investigative Reporter, Floodlight

**Reid Frazier**, Energy Reporter, The Allegheny Front | StateImpact Pennsylvania

**Amy Westervelt**, Executive Editor, DRILLED

### Session 4: Lightning Story Talk

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Let's hear from journalists about some of the stories they've been working on in the climate disinformation space. Highlighting stories from a range of sectors, including finance, politics, health and culture, we'll show attendees just how many different directions the climate disinfo beat can go in, and leave them plenty of time to ask questions about how to pursue these sorts of stories.

*Emcee:*

**Emily Atkin**, Editor-in-Chief, HEATED

*Presenters:*

**Maxine Joselow**, Reporter, The Washington Post  
"How Dark Money Groups Led Ohio To Redefine Gas As 'Green Energy'"

**Rebecca Leber**, Independent Climate Journalist and First Vice President, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

"How the Fossil Fuel Industry Convinced Americans To Love Gas Stoves"

**Miranda Green**, Director of Investigations, Floodlight  
"An Activist Group Is Spreading Misinformation To Stop Solar Projects in Rural America"

**Sharon Lerner**, Investigative Reporter, ProPublica  
"EPA Failed To Correct Industry Misinformation About Deadly Air Pollution at Public Meetings"

**Dharna Noor**, Fossil Fuels and Climate Reporter, The Guardian

"Revealed: US Utility Firms Offer Builders Cash and Trips To Fit New Homes With Gas Appliances"

**Maria Parazo Rose**, Reporter and Spatial Data Analyst, Grist

"Land-Grab Universities: How the United States Funded Land-Grant Universities With Expropriated Indigenous Land"

**Halle Parker**, Coastal Desk Reporter, WWNO New Orleans and Vice President, Programs, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

"What Happened to the EPA Investigation Into Louisiana's 'Cancer Alley'?"

**Pam Radtke**, Investigative Reporter, Floodlight  
"In 'Cancer Alley', US Chemical Giants Mount Campaign Against Grassroots Organizers"

**Arielle Samuelson**, Climate Reporter, Heated  
"The Fossil Fuel Industry's Deceptive Campaign To Kill Offshore Wind"

**Jenny Splitter**, Editor-in-Chief, Sentient Media

"The Dublin Declaration Is Riddled With Animal Industry Bias"



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Workshop 3. **Covering the Energy Transition: Who Wins, Who Loses?**

**8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (\$75 fee, includes breakfast and lunch)**

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 4 – 5, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Renewable energy projects are needed to stem the climate crisis and clean our air and water. But they also mean more extraction of minerals such as lithium, new waste streams and vastly expanded power-grid infrastructure that will affect ecosystems and small-town economies. We'll examine the environmental and social justice aspects of this major transition, both cradle-to-grave and project-to-project. Join leading energy reporters and experts to learn the ins and outs of covering utilities and new energy projects, including examining siting criteria, cumulative impacts, Conditional Use Permits and Environmental Impact Statements. This workshop will give reporters the tools they need to cover the endless new infrastructure and money trails of the energy transition, and find the environmental and social justice winners and losers in their regions. **SEJ members and journalists only. Space is limited; preregistration required.**

*Organizer:*

**Sammy Roth**, Climate Columnist, Los Angeles Times

*Emcee:*

**Rebecca Leber**, Independent Climate Journalist and First Vice President, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

### SCHEDULE

#### Coffee/breakfast available

**8:00 – 8:30 a.m.**

#### Welcome, Introductions and Plan for the Day

**8:30 – 8:45 a.m.**

#### Session 1: **Consequences of Clean Energy**

**8:45 – 10:15 a.m.**

We need solar panels, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries to confront the climate crisis. So how should journalists respond when critics say those technologies aren't so environmentally friendly, pointing to habitat destruction, bird deaths and desecration of sites sacred to Native American tribes? This session will help journalists sort fact from fiction, develop strategies for evaluating the environmental tradeoffs and understand more broadly the balance between local harms and global benefits to people and animals.

*Moderator:*

**Janet Wilson**, Senior Environment Reporter, The Desert Sun/USA Today

*Speakers:*

**Matt Eisenson**, Senior Fellow, Renewable Energy Legal Defense Initiative, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, Columbia University

**Jael Holzman**, Energy and Climate Reporter, Axios

#### Break

**10:15 – 10:30 a.m.**

#### Session 2: **Follow the Money**

**10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

The clean energy transition isn't necessarily smooth. This session will focus on both the monetary costs and benefits of electrification and clean technology, and the obstacles driving up costs. We'll cover topics like volatile electricity bills, corporate profits and stakes for taxpayers. Reporters should come away with ideas and tools for how to dig into national trends and engage in watchdog reporting on local utilities.

*Moderator:*

**Rebecca Leber**, Independent Climate Journalist and First Vice President, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists



*Speakers:*

**Dan Gearino**, Reporter, Inside Climate News  
**David Pomerantz**, Executive Director, Energy and Policy Institute  
**Emily Pontecorvo**, Staff Writer, Heatmap

**Lunch Session****12:00 – 1:00 p.m.**

A conversation between Floodlight investigative reporter **Kristi Swartz** and **Dr. Karl Hausker**, a former top official at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and currently a senior fellow at the World Resources Institute's Climate Program. They'll discuss what it will take to transition to 100% clean energy in the United States without causing blackouts – and while generating enough power to supply hundreds of millions of electric cars, heat pumps and induction stoves. What are the technical, economic and political barriers remaining, and how can we solve them?

**Session 3: Environmental Justice****1:00 – 2:00 p.m.**

The transition to clean energy holds promise for improving health in communities hit hardest by pollution and climate change, from electric vehicles and appliances to solar panels and an end to oil drilling in neighborhoods. But this transformation has the potential to magnify inequality along lines of race and class. Low-income people and communities of color stand to carry too many of the burdens of renewable energy and electrification and reap too few benefits. This session will help journalists with effective approaches to reporting on the energy transition through a lens of equity, inclusion and justice, and how to sensitively tell stories that lift up environmental justice communities without perpetuating existing fossil-fueled disparities.

*Moderator:*

**Tony Barboza**, Editorial Writer, Los Angeles Times; and Treasurer and Finance Chair, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

*Speakers:*

**Melba Newsome**, Independent Journalist and Director, Wake Forest University Environmental and Epistemic Justice Journalism Initiative  
**Victoria St. Martin**, Health and Environmental Justice Reporter, Inside Climate News  
**Lylla Younes**, Senior Staff Writer, Grist

**Session 4: Beyond Solar and Wind****2:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

Solar panels, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries can do most of the work to replace fossil fuels, but they won't be enough. When should we be skeptical of clean energy options that haven't proven themselves yet, and when should we take them seriously? This session will focus on how journalists who aren't energy experts should evaluate technologies such as green hydrogen, long-duration storage, carbon capture, next-generation nuclear reactors and more.

*Moderator:*

**Julian Spector**, Senior Reporter, Canary Media

*Speakers:*

**Justine Calma**, Senior Science Reporter, Verge  
**Cat Clifford**, Senior Science and Economics Correspondent, Cipher News  
**Casey Crownhart**, Climate Reporter, MIT Technology Review  
**Michelle Ma**, Clean Tech Reporter, Bloomberg

**SEJ Registration and Info Table****2:00 – 7:30 p.m.****Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Pick up your badge and conference materials. Find information about SEJ, our award winners, membership and other services. If you didn't sign up for a Thursday tour, the Saturday evening party at the Brooklyn Bowl or Sunday program at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, there might still be room (ticketed events with extra fee) – check with registration and sign up there.

**Afternoon Meet and Greet****3:30 – 5:30 p.m.****Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Grab a drink and snacks and chat with folks from UPenn's 12 schools, FactCheck.org and the Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, and the Media, or peruse the art exhibition Risky Beauty: Aesthetics and Climate Change, next door at the Annenberg School for Communication forum and plaza lobby. Meet up with old friends or make new ones. **Check out the networking map for options.**

**This event is sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.**



## Stats Essentials for Math-Averse Reporters

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for Communication, 5th Floor**

Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.

Many journalists lack confidence when including numbers in their reporting, or fear misrepresenting data when covering facts and figures, studies or technical reports. This session aims to take the stress out of reporting on the numbers that could be crucial to your next story. We'll cover concepts such as risk and odds, correlation strength, absolute and relative numbers, and p-values and how to use them in your reporting; how to tell how much uncertainty exists around a finding and judge the strength of that finding; statistical red flags in a study; and including numbers in your stories in ways that are accessible and meaningful to your audience.

*Presenters:*

**Tori Espensen**, Scientific Outreach Manager, SciLine

**Emily Mueller**, Scientific Outreach Manager, SciLine

## Opening Reception and Dinner

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Join up with your prearranged dinner gathering, check the networking map for options or just mingle and grab a seat anywhere. You'll find extra seating downstairs and in the tent on the plaza. Then, at 7:00 p.m., the theatre doors open for the evening program.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## Opening Program:

### Welcome to Philly!

7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

**Location: Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

We'll get an eye-opening lightning-round preview of UPenn's environmental-related research and efforts. And, you'll want to stick around till the end when our co-chairs showcase their city, its foods and sports craziness, and you'll hear from the Philly Youth Poet Laureate and take a virtual artistic tour through the city's amazing street murals and environmental justice history. Embedded inside the fun, we'll hear from our UPenn hosts and disinformation warriors – Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Michael Mann – who together have quite a story to tell about disinformation overwhelming our world and what we might be able to do about it, and they're ready to help lead an army of environmental journalists into battle!

*Emcees:*

**Meg McGuire**, Founder, Delaware Currents and #SEJ2024 Conference Chair

**Feini Yin**, Freelance Journalist and Fisheries Specialist



*Land Acknowledgement:*

**Jeremy Johnson**, Cultural Education Director, Delaware Tribe of Indians

*Speakers (in order of appearance):*

**Dawn Bonnell**, Senior Vice Provost for Research, University of Pennsylvania

**Rick Weiss**, Director, SciLine

**Kathleen Hall Jamieson**, Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication, Annenberg School for Communication and Director, Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania

**Michael Mann**, Presidential Distinguished Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Science and Director, Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, and the Media, University of Pennsylvania

**Katie Barott**, Assistant Professor of Biology, Penn Arts & Sciences, University of Pennsylvania

**William Braham**, Professor of Architecture, Weitzman School of Design, Center for Environmental Building + Design, and Kleinman Center for Energy Policy, University of Pennsylvania

**Joseph Francisco**, President’s Distinguished Professor, Departments of Chemistry and Earth & Environmental Science, Penn Arts & Sciences

**Dipti Pitta**, Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam Associate Professor of Ruminant Nutrition, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine

**Jennifer Pinto-Martin**, Viola MacInnes/Independence Professor of Nursing, Biobehavioral Health Sciences, Penn Nursing, and Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania

**Simon Richter**, Professor of German, Penn Arts & Sciences, and Penn Program in Environmental Humanities, University of Pennsylvania

**Eurhi Jones**, Artist, Mural Arts Philadelphia: “Beautify. Inspire. Empower.”

**Oyewumi Oyeniya**, Author and Youth Poet Laureate of Philadelphia

✓ **Thursday, April 4, 2024**

**SEJ Registration for Tour Participants Only**

**5:00 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Location: Benjamin Ballroom Foyer, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This time frame is for tour speakers and attendees only to register. Registration opens for everyone else today at 3:00 p.m. at the Sheraton (see below).

**All-Day Tours**

**Advance registration** is required for all Thursday tours. Attendance on each tour is strictly limited, so registering early is important. Departure times vary, but all Thursday tours will return to the Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel about 5:00 p.m. For those looking for some exercise, tours 3, 5, and 6 are your best options. Other tours involve moderate exercise. Tours 4, 8, and 9 are best suited for those with limited mobility.

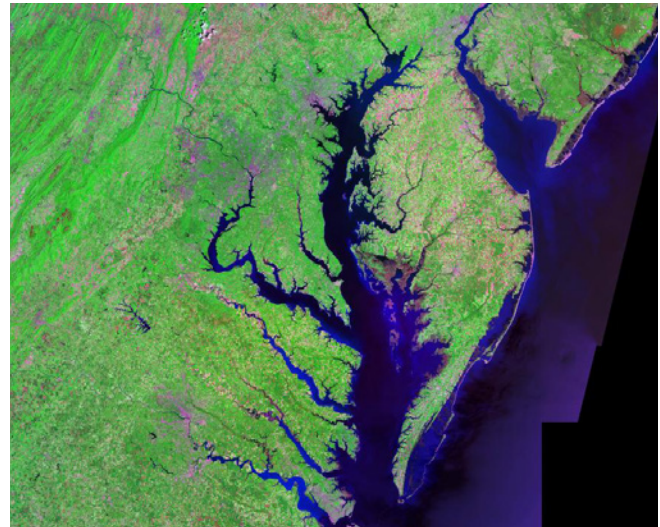


Image courtesy of NASA

**All-Day Tour 1. Chesapeake Challenge: Pollution Diet, Farm Runoff and Environmental Justice**

**5:30 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)**

After 40 years of trying and billions upon billions of dollars spent, the nation’s largest estuary is still in so-so shape. The much-heralded federal-state restoration “partnership” is about to blow past its fourth pollution cleanup deadline, with farm runoff proving particularly





difficult to control. Some are questioning whether a changed and changing Bay can ever be really restored, given climate change and population growth. They're also pointing out how the restoration effort has neglected the environmental justice needs of the watershed's disadvantaged communities. Join us for a day-long trip through a slice of the 64,000-square-mile Bay drainage basin. We plan to visit historic Havre de Grace at the head of the Chesapeake, where invasive blue catfish threaten to devour the Bay's iconic blue crabs and other native species. Next we'll visit **Conowingo Dam**, a hydro facility on the lower Susquehanna River that's controversial for its impact on fish migration and water quality. Then we'll swing north into Pennsylvania farm country to witness the struggle there to get a handle on runoff. Along the way we'll hear from restoration leaders, scientists and environmental activists, who'll share their varying perspectives on the once and future Bay. **Total drive time: 4.5 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Elizabeth DeOrnellas**, Environment/Agriculture Reporter, LNP | LancasterOnline  
**Timothy Wheeler**, Associate Editor/Senior Writer, Bay Journal and Chair, Freedom of Information Task Force, Society of Environmental Journalists

*Speakers:*

**Matt Ashton**, Biologist, Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
**Bill Dennison**, Interim President, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science  
**Brian Eckman**, Owner / Operator, Eckman Acres Farm  
**Ted Evgeniadis**, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper  
**Lamonte Garber**, Water Restoration Coordinator, Stroud Water Research Center  
**Hilary Harp Falk**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
**Denice Heller Wardrop**, Executive Director, Chesapeake Research Consortium and Research Professor of Geography, Pennsylvania State University  
**John Jackson**, Senior Research Scientist, Stroud Water Research Center  
**Claire Landis**, President, Donegal Trout Unlimited  
**Adam Ortiz**, Regional Administrator, Mid-Atlantic, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
**Brittany Smith**, Agriculture Project Manager, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay  
**Zach Taylor**, Freshwater Mussel Hatchery Manager, Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
**Fred Tutman**, Patuxent Riverkeeper

**Branson Williams**, Invasive Fish Program Manager, Maryland Department of Natural Resources



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

**All-Day Tour 2. Pennsylvania's Fossil Fuel Legacy**  
**6:00 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)**

Coal mining has fueled industry in Pennsylvania and heated its homes. It has also left it with a legacy of abandoned mines, waste coal heaps and polluted waterways. The tour will begin in coal country among the mountains of Schuylkill County. We will visit land scarred by anthracite coal mining dating back to the mid-1800s as well as projects to restore mine lands and treat abandoned mine drainage. On our way back to Philadelphia we will visit residents along **Energy Transfer's Mariner East** natural gas liquids pipelines in Chester County. The pipelines were built to carry the state's latest fossil fuel - Marcellus Shale gas, and stretch 350 miles across Pennsylvania. But almost immediately after construction began in 2017, it caused dozens of drilling mud spills into wetlands and waterways, led to dangerous sinkholes and polluted drinking water supplies across the entire length of the project. We visit the site where some of the most damage occurred and learn how the state's environmental regulations failed to protect residents and the environment. **Attendees are advised to wear shoes suitable for dirt or gravel surfaces. Total drive time: 4 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Bernard Brown**, Managing Editor, Grid Magazine



**Susan Phillips**, Senior Reporter/Editor, WHYY (Philadelphia) News Climate Desk

*Speakers:*

**Chris "PK" DiGiulio**, Environmental Chemist, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania and Co-Founder, Watchdogs of Southeastern Pennsylvania

**Danielle Friel Otten**, Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives (District 155)

**Ginny Marcille-Kerslake**, Resident, West Whiteland Township, Chester County; Geologist, West Whiteland Township Planning Board; and Organizer, Food and Water Watch

**David Masur**, Executive Director, PennEnvironment

**Megan McDonough**, Pennsylvania State Director, Food & Water Watch

**Lora Snyder**, Resident, Edgmont Township, Delaware County; Volunteer Community Environmental Advocate; Co-Founder, Watchdogs for Southeastern PA; and Licensed Occupational Therapist

Delaware River to create a reservoir and recreation area. But after years of protests from environmentalists, the dam was canceled and the land turned over to the National Park Service. Today the middle reach of the river is protected as **Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area**, and some environmental groups want to turn it into a national park — a proposal facing fierce opposition. This tour will go deep into the Water Gap to hear from those who lost their land, the history of battles over the river's water, who's advocating for and against national park status, and what the future holds for the Middle and Upper Delaware as the region grapples with climate change and water stress. We'll stop for short hikes to waterfalls and to access the river. Wear sturdy shoes. **Total drive time: 4.5 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Tom Henry**, Environmental-Energy Writer, The (Toledo) Blade

**Bobby Magill**, Water and Public Lands Reporter, Bloomberg Law and Member, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

*Speakers:*

**Kara Deutsch**, Chief of Resource Management and Science, National Park Service

**John Donahue**, President/Executive Director, Pinchot Institute for Conservation and former Superintendent, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, National Park Service

**Kelly Knutson**, Director, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, National Wildlife Federation

**Elizabeth "Beth" Koniers Brown**, Director, External Affairs and Communications, Delaware River Basin Commission

**Lindsey Kurnath**, Superintendent, Upper Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River, National Park Service

**Amy McHugh**, Deputy Delaware River Master, U.S. Geological Survey

**David Pierce**, Journalist and Author, "Tocks Island: Dammed if You Do"

**Levi Randoll**, Cultural Preservation Chair, Delaware Tribe of Indians

**Kathleen Sandt**, Public Affairs Specialist, National Park Service

**Doyle Sapp**, Superintendent, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, National Park Service

**Kate Schmidt**, Communications Specialist, Delaware River Basin Commission

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



**All-Day Tour 3. Delaware Water Gap: Taken Land, Water Wars and an Uncertain Future**  
**6:30 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)**

A history of epic water and land wars and injustice define the **Delaware River Basin**, the source of drinking water for more than 14 million people and the longest free-flowing river in the Eastern U.S. About 4,000 families were forced from their homes in the 1960s when the federal government proposed a dam on the



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### All-Day Tour 4. Delaware's Holy Trinity: Balancing Environmental Justice in Cities, Farms & Beaches

7:00 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)

Delaware has a secret to share. The lowest lying state in the union, where in some places the land is less than one foot above sea level, is a harbinger of climate change impacts. Coastal flooding from both ocean and inland bays is commonplace and increasing with the warming planet. With pristine beaches, and a \$4 billion annual tourism industry driving 10 million people to its shorelines, the Delaware secret is about environmental justice. Hiding in the sand is inner city conflict between access to natural resources, people and place in downtown Wilmington. Just below the surface are aquifers where lead and nitrates poison nearly all of the underground wells. Drinking water for school kids is lead-contaminated. Alongside the multi-million-dollar homes, and the millions of federal dollars earmarked for the best mid-Atlantic migratory bird flyover stops, runs the \$7.25 billion chicken industry and concerns about migrant labor at factory poultry farms. This duality is known to many Delawareans. Come with us to Wilmington, **Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge** in Milton and a working poultry farm in Middletown, Delaware to learn how these conflicts can co-exist. **Total drive time: 4 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

- Cheryl Hogue**, Independent Environmental Journalist
- Rachel Sawicki**, New Castle County Reporter, Delaware Public Media
- Mike Smith**, Staff Reporter - Environment, Coastal Point

*Speakers:*

- Ryan Greer**, Poultry Farmer/Producer, Perdue Farms
- Susan Guiteras**, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Coastal Delaware National Wildlife Refuge
- Karen Igou**, Project Manager, Green Building United
- Mike Levengood**, Vice President, Chief Animal Care Officer and Farmer Relationship Advocate, Perdue Farms
- Jeffrey Richardson**, Member, Board of Directors, Network Delaware and President/Chief Executive Officer, Imani Energy Inc.
- Kate Toniolo**, Project Leader, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge
- Matthew Williams**, Director, Dupont Environmental Education Center, Delaware Nature Society
- Bart Wilson**, Restoration Project Manager, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### All-Day Tour 5. Revolutionary Raptors: Hawk Mountain's Role in Equity and Ecology

7:30 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)

In 1945, Rachel Carson visited Pennsylvania's **Hawk Mountain** to catch a glimpse of the iconic birds of prey the mountain is famous for. She wrote about the "elemental landscape" in "the sweep of all the winds out of a great emptiness of sky," and the thrill of spotting a hawk in the distance, sharpening from a blur into an "unmistakable silhouette..etched on the gray." On this tour, which will take place during the 90th anniversary of the Hawk Mountain sanctuary, we'll visit the same



lookout where Carson once perched, binoculars in hand; hear about the sanctuary's pioneering founder, the conservationist Rosalie Edge; listen to stories about the Lenape connection to this landscape; hike with birder **Jason Hall**, who leads Philadelphia's inclusive In Color Birding club; and learn about raptor research at the mountain, ongoing since 1934. **This tour includes moderate hiking. Total drive time: 4 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Kiersten Adams**, Freelance Writer  
**Kiley Bense**, Reporter, Inside Climate News  
**Breanna Draxler**, Senior Editor, YES! Magazine

*Speakers:*

**Todd Bauman**, Director of Stewardship, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
**Jamie Dawson**, Director of Education, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
**Laurie Goodrich**, Director of Conservation Science, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
**Sean Grace**, President, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary  
**Jason Hall**, Founder, In Color Birding Club  
**Jeremy Johnson**, Cultural Education Director, Delaware Tribe of Indians

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



**All-Day Tour 6. From Farmbelt to Pinelands:  
 The Hidden Rural Lands (and Stories) of New Jersey**  
**8:00 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch  
 and snacks)**

This tour will reveal the rich farming and rural history of the low, fertile lands in a part of southern New Jersey

few people know about, and include a vast protected area known as the **Pinelands**, home of the Jersey Devil. The area was farmed for centuries by Lenni Lenape, or original people, until European settlers began taking land through grants in the late 1600s. We'll visit family-owned, preserved **A.T. Buzby Farm**, which sells direct to customers. We'll stop at the 63-acre **Cohanzick Nature Reserve** on land recently returned to ownership of the nonprofit Native American Advancement Corporation. We'll visit Upper Deerfield township, once the site of the world's largest industrial vegetable farm, **Seabrook Farms**. During the 1920s through 1950s, its workforce included southern U.S. Black migrant workers, Japanese-American refugees from World War II internment camps and displaced people from Estonia and other countries. We will visit a museum near the farm site and learn of the rise and fall of large-scale vegetable farming. At lunch, we'll head to the Pinelands, the nation's first national reserve that includes 1 million acres of protected pine barrens, Atlantic white cedar, oak and hundreds of miles of pristine lakes, streams and rivers. We'll take a roughly two-mile guided hike of the Pinelands starting at **Batsto Historic Village** with a picturesque lake where America's revolutionaries were supplied with cannonballs. The hike will be led by the **Outdoor Club of South Jersey** and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. It will take us on the Batona (BACK TO NAture) and 1808 trails. If you can't hike far, there will be an optional tour of the historic village, as well as access to the visitor center and picnic area. A state historian and forester will be on hand to answer questions and speak about the critical role wildfire plays on forest health. **Total drive time: 4.5 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Frank Kummer**, Environmental Reporter, The Philadelphia Inquirer  
**Christine Woodside**, Freelance Journalist and Author

*Speakers:*

**Susan Bacher**, Historic Preservation Officer, Delaware Tribe of Indians  
**Eric Buzby**, Owner/Farmer, A.T. Buzby Farm  
**James Douglas**, Communications, Assistant Commissioner's Office for State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites  
**John Earlin Jr.**, Section Forest Fire Warden, New Jersey Forest Fire Service  
**Larry Ericksen**, Executive Director, Seabrook Educational and Cultural Center  
**Rebecca Fitzgerald**, Administrator, New Jersey State Park Service



**Chris Ford**, Superintendent, Wharton State Forest  
**Tyrese Gould Jacinto**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Native American Advancement Corp. and Member, Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Nation

**John Hebble**, Resource Interpretive Specialist - Historic Resources, Batsto Village, Wharton State Forest

**Sam Hensen**, Regional Forester, New Jersey Forest Service

**Ro Mason**, Coordinator of Volunteers, Outdoor Club of South Jersey

**Trevor Raynor**, Assistant Division Forest Fire Warden, New Jersey Forest Fire Service

**John Seabrook**, Journalist, Author and grandson of Seabrook Farms founder C.F. Seabrook

**Andrew Urban**, Assistant Professor of American Studies and History, Rutgers University

**Sally Willig**, Lecturer & Academic Advisor, Master of Environmental Studies Program, University of Pennsylvania

**Todd Wyckoff**, State Forester, New Jersey Forest Service

the West," for its vast natural beauty and hundreds of animal, avian and fish species that rely on it to survive. For the few humans who live here, a different phrase comes to mind: "the forgotten coast." That a 70-mile stretch of essentially untouched coastline even exists in the most densely populated state in the nation is a staggering thought. But what makes this reality even more surprising is that New Jersey's Atlantic coast – the "Jersey Shore" – is developed to the hilt with million-dollar real estate. This dichotomy has created a simmering resentment on the "Bayshore," where some residents feel abandoned by the state government. Indeed, in recent years, as sea level rises and the Bayshore's land rapidly erodes, the state of New Jersey has actively pushed for the region's residents to sell back their properties so that they may return to open space. We'll travel along a stretch of this desolate yet intensely beautiful coast. First we'll stop at the hamlet of **Money Island**, where we'll talk with a resident who refuses to leave and tour a rehabilitated shoreline that was once a part of the town with representatives of the American Littoral Society. Next, we'll have lunch at the **Bayshore Center at Bivalve**, where we'll explore the past, present and future of New Jersey's shellfish industry. Finally, we'll visit the Cape May Water Department to learn about how they are increasingly battling with saltwater intrusion. **Total drive time: 4 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Andrew Lewis**, Freelance Journalist and Author, "The Drowning of Money Island"

**Michael Sol Warren**, Producer, NJ Spotlight News

*Speakers:*

**Rob Cummiskey**, Superintendent, City of Cape May Water/Sewer Utility

**Rachel Dolhanczyk**, Museum Curator, Bayshore Center at Bivalve

**Shane Godshall**, Habitat Restoration Project Manager, American Littoral Society

**Tom Herrington**, Associate Director, Urban Coast Institute, Monmouth University

**Shawn LaTourette**, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

**Tony Novak**, Resident, Money Island

**Toni Rose Tablante**, Habitat Restoration Technician, American Littoral Society

**Courtney Wald-Wittkop**, Blue Acres 3.0 Program Manager, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

**Jessica Yorke**, Executive Director, Bayshore Center at Bivalve

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## All-Day Tour 7. Stay or Go? Development vs. Open Space on New Jersey's Ecological Jewel, the Delaware Bayshore

**8:30 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)**

Scientists and conservationists often refer to New Jersey's Delaware Bay shoreline as the "Serengeti of



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## All-Day Tour 8. Burning Issue: The Battle for Environmental Justice in Fenceline Communities

9:00 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)

On both sides of the Delaware River in Philadelphia and New Jersey, historically marginalized communities are used to breathing unhealthy air coming from the smokestacks of polluting industries. In South Philadelphia, a now-shuttered oil refinery — which once processed 335,000 barrels of crude oil each day and practically looks like a city in itself — was once the largest source of particulate air pollution in the city. After a series of back-to-back explosions in 2019, nearby residents fought back to shut down the refinery. And they succeeded. But today, the land still remains empty, leaving residents wondering about the fate of the property. Meanwhile, across the river in Camden, a waste incinerator still stands despite multiple rallying cries from residents to shut it down. Even a Greenpeace climate activist once came in the early 1990s to protest the city’s waste incinerator, climbing up to the top of the smokestack and dropping a massive banner. But despite the industries plaguing the area, community members are tackling a variety of solutions the best they can to counteract some of the area’s dirtiest secrets, whether that’s through urban farming, community gardens or building coalitions. On this environmental justice and community solutions tour, you’ll hear from the scientists, community advocates and government officials who are working on these complex issues, visit some of the most at-risk places by walking along the fenceline, and hopefully enjoy a hearty lunch sourced from local community gardens. **Total drive time: 2.5 hours.**

### Tour Leaders:

- Jordan Gass-Pooré**, Creator/Host, “Hazard NJ” podcast (NJ Spotlight News/NJ PBS)
- Rachel Ramirez**, Climate Writer, CNN Digital
- Sophia Schmidt**, Reporter, WHYY (Philadelphia)
- Victoria St. Martin**, Health and Environmental Justice Reporter, Inside Climate News

### Speakers:

- Kevin Barfield**, Community Activist, Volunteer for Camden for Clean Air and former President, Camden County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Lisa Garcia**, Administrator, Region 2, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Marilyn Howarth**, Deputy Director, Philadelphia Regional Center for Children’s Environmental Health and Director, Community Engagement, Center of Excellence in Environmental Toxicology, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
- Roy Jones**, Founder and Executive Director, National Institute of Healthy Human Spaces
- Christoff Lindsey**, Principal Urban Grower, Nyame Nti Urban Farm
- Stephen McBay**, Press Officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Bilal Motley**, Filmmaker and former Refinery Worker, Philadelphia Energy Solutions
- Erik Olson**, Strategic Director for Health, Environmental Health Program, Natural Resources Defense Council
- Kandyce Perry**, Director, Office of Environmental Justice, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- Shawmar Pitts**, Co-Managing Director and Policy Coordinator, Philly Thrive
- Alain Plante**, Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Science, University of Pennsylvania
- Sonya Sanders**, Member, Philly Thrive
- Jerome Shabazz**, Executive Director, Overbrook Environmental Education Center
- Kabindra Shakya**, Associate Professor, Environmental Science, Department of Geography and the Environment, Villanova University
- Sheila Tripathy**, Senior Research Scientist, Dornsife School of Public Health, Drexel University



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



**All-Day Tour 9. Energy in the East: Offshore Wind, LNG and Who Gets To Say “No” to Development**

**9:30 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)**

Aesthetic and environmental backlash to large-scale energy developments has become a major sticking point in the U.S. climate and energy transition. As the East Coast leads the Biden administration’s charge to build massive amounts of offshore wind, some neighboring communities and fisheries are fighting back hard. These debates can be rife with misinformation, overshadowing environmental justice challenges from fossil fuel development in neighborhoods not far away. On this tour, journalists will head to Atlantic City, N.J., to learn about the environmental impacts of and political debate around proposed offshore wind projects, comparing their massive scale to the land-based turbines that power the coastal community’s wastewater plant. We’ll also visit the future **New Jersey Wind Port** in Lower Alloways Creek, N.J., which will help build these huge projects. And we’ll meet activists and local leaders in Chester, Pa., a majority-Black city just outside Philadelphia. The first federally designated environmental justice community in the country, it houses the largest waste-burning energy facility in the U.S. and is now fighting a proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal. Join us to learn best practices for engaging with communities who are trying to sort fact from fiction about large-scale energy proposals, explore the climate justice concept of “energy privilege” and improve your approach to covering emotional siting debates with empathy and context. **Total drive time: 2.5 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

- Amanda Oglesby**, Environmental Reporter, Asbury Park Press/USA Today Network
- Annie Ropeik**, Freelance Journalist and Secretary, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists
- Charmaine Runes**, Interactive Designer/Developer, The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Speakers:*

- Tracy Carluccio**, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- Monica Coffey**, Senior Officer, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications, New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- Doug Copeland**, Business Development and Strategic Partnerships Manager, Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind
- William Dixon**, Director, Pre-Construction & Division of Coastal Engineering, New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- Dan Fatton**, Director, Offshore Wind Sector, New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- Joseph Hohenstein**, Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives (District 177)
- Mark Magyar**, Director, Steve Sweeney Center for Public Policy, Rowan University
- Zulene Mayfield**, Founder, Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living
- Amy Menzel**, Communications Manager, Atlantic County Utilities Authority
- Brandon Nehring**, Plant Manager, Wind Park Bear Creek and Jersey-Atlantic Wind, Leeward Renewable Energy
- Kevin O’Donnell**, Regulatory Compliance Specialist, Atlantic County Utilities Authority
- Kris Ohleth**, Director, Special Initiative on Offshore Wind
- Geraldine Quintero**, Communications Associate, Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind
- Joseph Romm**, Senior Research Fellow, Penn Center for Science, Sustainability and the Media, University of Pennsylvania
- Stefan Roots**, Mayor, Chester, Pa.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### All-Day Tour 10. Fighting for Clean Water: From Benjamin Franklin to Water Woman

10:00 a.m. departure (\$75 fee, includes lunch and snacks)

In 1739, Philadelphia’s favorite transplant, Benjamin Franklin, petitioned the Pennsylvania Assembly to stop waste and tannery pollution in Dock Creek along the Delaware River. Nearly 300 years later, Dock Creek is now buried and shoehorned into Philadelphia’s combined sewer system, from which billions of gallons of sewage overflow into waterways each year. This tour will take journalists on a trip exploring past-to-present challenges from clean water to climate change as the city becomes hotter and wetter. Attendees will visit a modern water treatment plant and discover the Philadelphia Water Department’s globally-innovative green stormwater infrastructure solutions and efforts to provide affordable, safe drinking water to America’s poorest big city. Stops will also include the **Science History Institute** in scenic Old City where Franklin once roamed, and the **Fairmount Water Works**, a 19th-century water treatment plant now serving as a museum along the banks of the Schuylkill River. **Total drive time: 1.5 hours.**

*Tour Leaders:*

**Kyle Bagenstose**, Freelance Journalist  
**Julie Hancher**, Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Green Philly

*Speakers:*

**Lance Butler**, Senior Scientist, Philadelphia Water Department

- Ellen Kohler**, Director of Applied Research and Programs, The Water Center, School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania
- William Kovarik**, Historian and Professor, Radford University
- Victoria Prizzia**, Exhibit Designer, Habitèque
- John Rumpler**, Clean Water Director and Senior Attorney, Environment America
- Jesse Smith**, Director of Curatorial Affairs, Science History Institute
- Chloe Wang**, River Programs Coordinator, Bartram’s Garden
- Vivian Williams**, Environmental Education Consultant
- Karen Young**, Executive Director, Fairmount Water Works



Image courtesy of Princeton University

### Afternoon Tour 11. The Energy Underneath Your Feet – Princeton’s Massive Geo-Exchange System and Transition to Net-Zero

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Preregistration required, no fee; includes a catered vegan lunch and transportation provided by Princeton University. Close-toed shoes and pants are required.

Discover the energy storage technology on Princeton University’s campus that could help places across the country reach their sustainability goals. Unlike traditional geothermal energy, which pulls existing heat from the earth, Princeton’s geo-exchange works like an underground energy bank. The University pulls excess heat out of campus buildings throughout the





year and stores it underground until it's needed. Join us on a tour to see the inner workings of this system. You'll hear from facilities leads about what it takes to run the geo-exchange system and from a Princeton University professor about his energy transition research. You'll see one of the world's largest geo-exchange systems up close, including the active drilling sites and a new heat pump plant. Participants will also get a peek at the pair of 2.2 million gallon water storage tanks holding hot and cold water for the campus.

*Tour Leaders:*

**Emily Foxhall**, Climate Reporter, The Texas Tribune  
**Don Hopey**, former Environment Writer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, former SEJ Board President and two-time SEJ Conference Chair

*Speakers:*

**Ted Borer**, Director, Energy Plants, Princeton University  
**Jesse Jenkins**, Assistant Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, Princeton University  
**Brian Robertson**, Project Manager, Campus Geo-Exchange, Princeton University  
**Molly Seltzer**, Environmental Content Strategist, Princeton University

## SEJ Registration and Info Table

3:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**Location: Benjamin Ballroom Foyer, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Pick up your badge and conference materials. Find information about SEJ, our award winners, membership and other services. If you didn't sign up for the Saturday evening party at the Brooklyn Bowl or Sunday program at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, there might still be room (ticketed events with extra fee) — check with registration and sign up there.

## Independent Hospitality Receptions

5:00 – 9:00 p.m.

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Hospitality Receptions are independently organized by the hosts, who are solely responsible for any content, speakers or materials.

Now a popular SEJ tradition, this is the conference's best networking opportunity. After spending the day in the field, meet with hosts of multiple receptions. They'll have experts on hand as well as displays, materials and, of course, great FREE food and drink. Mingle and build your source list.

*Reception hosts:*

**Bracewell LLP**  
**E2**  
**Environment America**  
**Marine Stewardship Council**  
**National Alliance of Forest Owners**  
**National Audubon Society**  
**Ocean Sewage Alliance**  
**The Pew Charitable Trusts**  
**Schneider Electric**

## Bookstore

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

The University of Pennsylvania bookstore is on site to sell SEJ member-attendees' and speakers' books, as well as offering environmental books handpicked for the SEJ conference.




**Friday, April 5, 2024**

### Beat Breakfast

7:00 – 8:15 a.m.

This year we have a Beat Breakfast, as well as Beat Dinners! Check the agenda or Whova app for details and to RSVP.

### Breakfast Buffet

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts \*and\* Lobby, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This breakfast is sponsored by **Beyond Petrochemicals**.

### SEJ Registration and Info Table

8:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Pick up your badge and conference materials. Find information about SEJ, our award winners, membership and other services. If you didn't sign up for the Saturday evening party at the Brooklyn Bowl or Sunday program at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, there might still be room (ticketed events with extra fee) – check with registration and sign up there.

*NOTE: Attendees are invited to peruse the art exhibition **Risky Beauty: Aesthetics and Climate Change**, next door at the Annenberg School for Communication forum and plaza lobby. Hours: Monday to Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.*



Image courtesy of EPA

### U.S. EPA Administrator Michael Regan Keynote and Q&A

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

**Location: Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 16th Administrator, **Michael S. Regan**, will join us for a keynote presentation and Q&A with journalists. Regan is the first Black man and second person of color to lead the EPA, and is the first standing Administrator to speak at the SEJ annual conference in 20 years – not since Michael Levitt in Pittsburgh in 2004.

*Moderator:*

**Jennifer Hijazi**, Senior Reporter, Bloomberg Law



**Concurrent Sessions 1**

10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime

**Making Obscure Animals and Ecosystems  
Compelling Main Characters****Location: Room 109, Annenberg School for  
Communication, 1st Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security station and into the lobby, proceed down the ramp. Room 109 will be the second classroom on the left.*

Pandas and forests are out. Moths and peatlands are in. During this panel — featuring some of the nation’s top wildlife writers — we’ll learn how to get readers deeply invested in stories about wildlife and ecosystems that are not traditionally charismatic. These could be obscure creatures and places that some readers have never heard of, or animals that many people consider icky pests. This panel, focused on craft, will explore how to bring their stories and true value to life.

*Moderator:***Benji Jones**, Senior Reporter, Vox Media*Speakers:***Bethany Brookshire**, Freelance Science Journalist and Author, “Pests: How Humans Create Animal Villains”**Maya L. Kapoor**, Freelance Journalist and Engagement Manager, Covering Climate Now  
**Douglas Main**, Freelance Journalist

Image courtesy of Dreamstime

**A Just Transition for Oil Towns****Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for  
Communication, 5th Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.*

If the U.S. is truly going to make an energy transition away from fossil fuels, some of the 129 oil refineries now in operation domestically and the 500,000 producing American oil wells will eventually have to curb production or shut down altogether. As a country, we have barely begun asking questions about what happens to these facilities and the communities and landscapes around them. What will become of communities that depend on tax revenue from these industries? What do we offer the workers who are or were employed at these sites? How do we clean up decades of soil or water contamination? In this session, we’ll hear from sources who have coped with the closure of a major oil facility in their community (including in Philadelphia) — and those who are planning for a future in which such industries shut down.

*Moderator:***Darren Incorvaia**, Freelance Journalist

*Speakers:*

**David Bond**, Associate Director, Center for the Advancement of Public Action, Bennington College  
**Marisol Cantú**, Environmental Justice Advocate and Steering Committee Member, Richmond Progressive Alliance  
**Madeline Ostrander**, Knight Science Journalism Fellow, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
**Shawmar Pitts**, Co-Director and Policy Coordinator, Philly Thrive



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Communicate, Don't (Just) Infuriate: Strengthening How Climate Journalism Converses With the World

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 1 – 2, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Join us for an interactive round of “Jeopardy: The Game of Smart Journalism Communication.” You might win some prizes, and you’ll definitely get examples of healthier, holistic communication techniques within journalism and in surprising fields outside of it. We’ll share research from journalism, neuroscience, community psychology, narrative and more that can contribute to bringing communities together and solving pressing climate issues. Journalists will unlock new ways of interviewing, reporting and talking about climate stories that contribute to feelings of agency and connectedness rather than defeating them.

*Presenters:*

**Allen Arthur**, Freelance Journalist and Online Engagement Manager, Solutions Journalism Network  
**Angela Evans**, Climate Network Manager, Solutions Journalism Network

### Eat Local, Just Transition and the Search for Holistic Food System Solutions

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 3, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Improving food systems is a gargantuan, complex task and there is no silver bullet that fixes every problem. How could there be, when we’re talking about consolidated corporate power, climate emissions, food security, water pollution and animal welfare – just to name some of the most vexing? Yet communities, researchers and advocates are taking these challenges on, and you want to report on their efforts. In this panel, we’ll discuss stories of hopeful solutions, problems to be mindful of when you cover agriculture and the sneaky reporting traps to avoid.

*Moderator:*

**Jenny Splitter**, Editor-in-Chief, Sentient Media

*Speakers:*

**Garrett Broad**, Associate Professor, Communication Studies, Rowan University  
**Malaika Hart Gilpin**, Co-Founder and Co-Creator, One Art Community Center  
**Matt Scott**, Director of Storytelling and Engagement, Project Drawdown  
**Feini Yin**, Freelance Journalist and Fisheries Specialist



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Using Emerging Data and Climate Science to Better Cover Wildfire Smoke's Effects

**Location: University Suite,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

As climate-driven “smoke-a-geddens” become a fixture, emerging data sets from NASA’s satellite and other sources offer valuable insights for journalists to comprehensively cover causes and effects of wildfires. A better understanding of the legacy effects of wildfires from an ecological and climate perspective means journalists can also integrate these findings with human health, social justice and policy implications. New research from Canada and elsewhere shows how severely thinned and clearcut forests release more emissions than fires and actually make forests more vulnerable to large climate-driven wildfires. This session aims to provide the latest science and guidance on how to access high-quality data and other scientific resources to enhance more informed reporting on wildfire smoke and effects related to climate change and land-use practices. This will include a preview of a NASA dataset schedule to be released in April.

*Moderator:*

**Dillon Bergin**, Data Reporter, MuckRock

*Speakers:*

**Jenny Bratburd**, Researcher, Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Outreach Program Manager, Health and Air Quality Applied Sciences Team, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

**Dominick DellaSala**, Chief Scientist, Wild Heritage (project of the Earth Island Institute)



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## Working With Whistleblowers

**Location: William Penn Suite,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This session will educate journalists about how to work with government employee whistleblowers. It will offer concrete steps that participants can take to connect with whistleblowers and work with them to get critical information to the public without further risk to their careers. We’ll talk about the whistleblower experience, in general, and then we’ll take a deep dive into EPA and whistleblowers there who have come forward on chemical issues.

*Moderator:*

**Sharon Lerner**, Investigative Reporter, ProPublica

*Speakers:*

**Kyla Bennett**, Director, New England PEER and Director of Science Policy, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility  
**Scientist and EPA Whistleblower TBA**



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Hydrogen: Climate Solution Or Climate Distraction?

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 4,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Hydrogen is getting a lot of attention — and public money — as a potential zero-carbon energy source for hard to clean up industries, like cement, steel and long-distance hauling. But there are also great concerns over hydrogen — especially about whether it could be a giant greenwashing opportunity for fossil fuel and related industries, and whether it could actually speed up global warming if done incorrectly.

*Moderator:*

**Reid Frazier**, Energy Reporter, The Allegheny Front | Statelmpact Pennsylvania

*Speakers:*

**Mark Clincy**, Member, PhillyThrive

**Dave Edwards**, Director and Advocate for Hydrogen Energy, Air Liquide

**Julian Spector**, Senior Reporter, Canary Media

**Siana Teelucksingh**, Manager, Hydrogen Team, Climate Aligned Industries, RMI



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## Unpacking Rural Reporting: How Can Environmental Journalists More Fairly Represent Rural Communities?

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 5,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

After Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, the mainstream media turned its attention toward rural America, which was credited for putting Trump in the White House. Much of this coverage evoked one-dimensional images of a white, angry, uneducated rural voter, even though rural America is more diverse and nuanced than these portrayals would have you believe. Not much has changed in the eight years since to move the needle on rural America's profile. This panel will explore why fair rural representation matters and the role environmental journalists have to play.

*Moderator:*

**Claire Carlson**, Staff Correspondent, Daily Yonder

*Speakers:*

**Shreya Agrawal**, Climate Journalist and Communicator

**Jen Byers**, Independent Investigative Journalist

**Tim Marema**, Editor-at-Large, Daily Yonder

**Valerie Vande Panne**, Independent Journalist and Editor

## Exhibits

**11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Don't miss the wealth of information offered by the 2024 exhibitors. Learn about environmental issues and



innovations, see some great displays and add to your source list.

### Beverage Break

11:15 – 11:45 a.m.

**Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts \*and\* Lobby, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

### Concurrent Sessions 2

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### On the Move

**Location: Room 109, Annenberg School for Communication, 1st Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security station and into the lobby, proceed down the ramp. Room 109 will be the second classroom on the left.*

Over the next 50 years, the climate crisis is likely to force an unprecedented global migration – including within the United States – as roughly 20% of the Earth’s land shifts towards a climate that has traditionally been inhospitable to civilization and half of humanity faces extreme heat, greater food scarcity and higher mortality. Inside the United States, new research suggests as many as 160 million Americans may face rapidly degrading environments too, and tens of millions of citizens are also likely to move, transforming whole economies from tourism to agriculture and the very

nature of our cities. How do we cover the next great human migration?

*Moderator:*

**Perla Trevizo**, Reporter, ProPublica

*Speakers:*

**Rachel Cleetus**, Policy Director, Climate and Energy Program, Union of Concerned Scientists

**Abrahm Lustgarten**, Climate Reporter, ProPublica and Author, “On the Move: The Overheating Earth and the Uprooting of America”

**Kayly Ober**, Senior Program Officer, Climate, Environment and Conflict, United States Institute of Peace



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### How the Essential, Dirty Steel Industry Is Going ‘Green’

**Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for Communication, 5th Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.*

Steel is an essential material, but steelmaking is an incredibly dirty process, responsible for as much as 9% of annual CO2 emissions – plus a toxic soup of



pollutants that threatens neighboring communities. With global steel demand projected to rise 30 percent by 2050, the need for “green steel” is growing increasingly urgent. This panel — taking place in a historic steelmaking state — will explore the opportunities and challenges around replacing coal-based steel mills with cleaner production methods. Panelists will discuss the new technologies and government policies required to drive the green-steel transition; the role that electric-car companies can play in spurring demand; and how the shift could affect steel workers and fenceline communities in important, nuanced ways.

*Moderator:*

**Maria Gallucci**, Senior Reporter, Canary Media

*Speakers:*

**Edith Abeyta**, Community Member, North Braddock Residents for Our Future

**Chathu Gamage**, Principal, Climate-Aligned Industries, RMI

**Hilary Lewis**, Steel Director, Industrious Labs

*Presenter:*

**Laura Moscoso**, Training Director, Investigative Reporters and Editors



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## Cutting Through Carbon Capture Greenwash

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 3, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Carbon capture and storage, or CCS, is being framed as a climate solution, with huge government subsidies driving development worldwide. From “green” LNG to “net-zero oil” to “blue” hydrogen, proponents promise CCS will solve our climate problems by burying carbon emissions in the ground. But behind this hype is a track record of lackluster pilot projects, and growing evidence that fossil fuel companies are using CCS primarily to extract more oil — while adding to the industry’s record of environmental injustice. This panel of journalists and community organizers will help you understand what CCS is, unpack its deep ties to the fossil fuel industry and share practical tips for how to critically cover it.

*Moderator:*

**Lindsey Smith**, Freelance Journalist and Managing Editor, DeSmog.com

*Speakers:*

**Geoff Dembicki**, Investigative Climate Reporter, DeSmog

**Chris “PK” DiGiulio**, Environmental Chemist, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania and Co-Founder, Watchdogs of Southeastern Pennsylvania

**Kate Huangpu**, Government Reporter, Spotlight PA

**Sean O’Leary**, Senior Researcher, Ohio River Valley Institute

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## What Type of Dataviz for What Type of Information?

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 1 – 2, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Focusing on SEJ’s preferred topics for 2024 (democracy, disinformation, election, environmental justice, water quality), IRE will give a session on the concepts of dataviz and design, the thinking process behind selecting a graphical representation of information, and share free online tools for reporters. The class will include real-life examples to provoke critical thinking and a group exercise so attendees can apply fundamental concepts.





Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Big Costs, Sweeping Changes: What To Know About the IRA and IIJA

**Location: University Suite,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

The United States is at a critical juncture. The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act provide billions of dollars aimed at changing the nation's energy landscape in an effort to fight climate change. But across the country, those federal investments in things such as carbon capture and battery factories are stirring up controversy over how the money is being spent and who is actually benefiting. This session will delve into those topics with an overview of the IRA and IIJA and, importantly, will teach reporters how to follow the money by showcasing data reporting done by POLITICO.

*Moderator:*

**Pam Radtke**, Investigative Reporter, Floodlight

*Panelists:*

**Jessie Blaeser**, Data and Graphics Reporter, POLITICO

**Jane Patton**, Campaigns Manager, US Fossil Economy, Center for International Environmental Law  
**Jigar Shah**, Director, Loan Programs Office, U.S. Department of Energy

**Kelsey Tamborrino**, Energy Reporter, POLITICO



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## From the Margins to the Mainstream: Rethinking Environmental Justice Coverage

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 4,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This panel addresses the urgent need for news media to evolve its approach to reporting on environmental justice, emphasizing underreported issues such as the impact of hazardous waste on marginalized communities, as seen in Pennsylvania and communities across the U.S. It will highlight the systemic reasons behind the lack of coverage, including a lack of diversity in newsrooms and prevailing editorial biases. Panelists will provide tips on the ways journalists can champion the role of nonwhite media outlets and integrate diverse and inclusive coverage of environmental issues. A crucial part of this approach is the inclusion of community voices, especially those impacted by hazardous waste and pollution.

*Moderator:*

**Evlondo Cooper**, Senior Researcher, Climate & Energy Program, Media Matters for America

*Speakers:*

**Charles Ellison**, Principal & Chief Strategist, B|E Strategy

**Jordan Gass-Pooré**, Creator/Host, "Hazard NJ" podcast (NJ Spotlight News/NJ PBS)

**Bilal Motley**, Filmmaker and former Refinery Worker, Philadelphia Energy Solutions

**Tammy Murphy**, Advocacy Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Care and Community As a Climate Solution

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 5,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Climate coverage tends to focus on storylines of gloom and doom. Join us for a conversation on how we can center care, solidarity, joy and resilience in climate reporting. This panel will explore mental health challenges journalists face and the trauma that comes with climate beats. We will address online abuse that journalists are facing from climate deniers and others. We will share resources to help journalists navigate climate anxiety and stress. Questions addressed include: How can we center community care and allyship when facing online abuse? What are ways to make space for hope, resilience and realistic solutions for different communities?

*Moderator:*

**Sofia Prado Huggins**, Project and Social Media Manager, The Uproot Project

*Speakers:*

**Yessenia Funes**, Editor-at-Large, Atmos; Founding Member, The Uproot Project; and Columnist, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Jeje Mohamed**, Senior Manager, Digital Safety & Free Expression, PEN America

**Lucia Priselac**, Director, The Uproot Project

**Matt Scott**, Director of Storytelling and Engagement, Project Drawdown

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Covering the Environmental Impact of War

**Location: William Penn Suite,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

War coverage understandably focuses on the immediate toll on civilians. But the destruction of both infrastructure and the environment could impact those same populations for decades to come. The wars in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as localized conflicts in Africa and Southeast Asia pollute the land and water, exacerbate the release of climate warming emissions and threaten progress on combating climate change. Additionally, recent tensions have raised the nuclear threat, which even if never used, the production of which threatens the environment and public health. This panel will explore how environmental journalists can cover war and broaden the public's view of its long-term devastation.

*Moderator:*

**Susan Phillips**, Senior Reporter/Editor, WHYY (Philadelphia) News Climate Desk

*Speakers:*

**Tareq Abu Hamed**, Executive Director, Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (virtual)

**Carolyn Beeler**, Climate Reporter and Co-Host, The World

**Karen Coates**, Co-Producer/Editor, "Eternal Harvest" Documentary Film and Fellowship Editor, Mongabay

**Alan Robock**, Distinguished Professor, Atmospheric Science Group, Department of Environmental Sciences, Rutgers University



## Networking Lunch

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

**Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Join a topic table or one of the lunch breakout sessions below. Check the web agenda or Whova app for the topic list and table map.

## Lunch Breakout Sessions

1:30 – 2:45 p.m.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Breakout 1. Rethinking Environmental and Climate Journalism Education

**Location: Room 109, Annenberg School for Communication, 1st Floor**

Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security station and into the lobby, proceed down the ramp. Room 109 will be the second classroom on the left.

We'll have an open discussion about the future needs of environmental/climate and environmental/climate justice journalists, what we can do to change the core academic curriculum, how we can teach journalism beyond the traditional university/college setting, what resources are available and what we should expect in the coming years.

*Moderator:*

**Bernardo Motta**, Associate Professor of Journalism, Roger Williams University

*Speakers:*

**Karen Coates**, Fellowship Editor, Mongabay  
**Karla Mendes**, Investigative Reporter, Mongabay (Brazil-based); Fellow, Pulitzer Center's Rainforest Investigations Network; and Second Vice President and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Laura Moorhead**, Associate Professor of Journalism, San Francisco State University

**Lisa Palmer**, Research Professor of Science Communication, George Washington University; Senior Editor and Education Lead, Planet Forward; Journalist and Author

**Andrea Wenzel**, Associate Professor of Journalism, Klein College of Media and Communication, Temple University



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Breakout 2. DEI Green 2.0 Report

**Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for Communication, 5th Floor**

Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.



Join SEJ DEI leaders to learn more about a report to lay the groundwork for SEJ to foster and grow diversity, equity and inclusion in the field of environmental journalism by conducting a report in collaboration with Green 2.0. Progenitors of the initiative will present and answer questions. The initiative is yet to be fully funded so we are requesting anyone interested to connect with SEJ staff or leadership about how to assist in filling the funding gap.

*Presenters:*

**Nadia Lopez**, Environment Reporter, CalMatters and Member, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Rico Moore**, Freelance Journalist, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists (virtual)



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Opening Plenary

#### Election 2024: How Will Climate Change Matter?

3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**Location: Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The 2024 election is likely to dominate coverage across local, regional and national newsrooms. And it's not just about the Oval Office. Congressional, state legislatures, city council and utility and school board seats are up for grabs. At the same time, "climate" has crept up as a policy issue voters care about. In recent polls, Democrats consistently rank it as one of their top issues and although Republicans tend to rank it lower, it is high on the list for younger Republicans. But both parties want to see more from their leaders on this front. How does climate change affect voter turnout? Where can this be the salient issue that makes or breaks a race? And what are the implications for climate after the acceptance speeches are given?

*Emcee:*

**Meg McGuire**, Founder, Delaware Currents and #SEJ2024 Conference Chair



*Moderator:*

**Ximena Bustillo**, Political Reporter, National Public Radio

*Speakers:*

**Brittany Bell Surratt**, Senior Director, Storytelling and Communications, Hip Hop Caucus

**Karly Matthews**, Vice President of Communications, American Conservation Coalition

**Nathaniel Stinnett**, Founder and Executive Director, Environmental Voter Project

**Wendy Wendlandt**, President, Environment America and Senior Vice President, The Public Interest Network

## Networking Happy Hour With EPA PIOs and Others

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

We'll convene for a networking happy hour with EPA PIOs from headquarters and numerous regions across the country, plus other agencies and topical tables. Hors d'oeuvres and hosted bar.

## Bookstore

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The University of Pennsylvania bookstore is on site to sell SEJ member-attendees' and speakers' books, as well as offering environmental books handpicked for the SEJ conference.

## Beat Dinners

Choose from three types of beat dinners in varied time ranges.

### No-Host Beat Dinners

SEJ members and attendees are welcome to organize a no-host (self-pay) dinner or meet-up. Head to the Community tab on the Whova app to arrange your own event and invite friends and colleagues.

### SEJ-Organized Beat Dinners

SEJ-Organized Beat Dinners are organized by SEJ members and staff, and costs are covered by grants to SEJ. If you would like to pay for your own dinner, please email SEJ at SEJ@SEJ.org.

## Sponsored Beat Dinners

Sponsored Beat Dinners are independently organized by the hosts, who are solely responsible for any content, speakers or materials. Sign up online for Beat Dinners hosted by a variety of organizations. If you would like to pay for your own dinner, please contact the host directly.



**Saturday, April 6, 2024**

### SEJ Members Breakfast With the Board

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

**Location: Fairmount Suite, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

**Breakfast available 7:00 – 8:30 a.m.**

Board members will be in attendance, and will be presenting a few priorities for the remainder of the year. SEJ members: you're invited to attend if you'd like to speak with SEJ board leadership in person on anything that's top of mind.

### Breakfast Buffet

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts \*and\* Lobby, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

This breakfast is sponsored by the **Funder Collaborative on Oil and Gas** and the **2030 Fund**.

### SEJ Registration and Info Table

8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Pick up your badge and conference materials. Find information about SEJ, our award winners, membership and other services. If you didn't sign up for the Saturday evening party at the Brooklyn Bowl or Sunday program at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, there might still be room (ticketed events with extra fee) – check with registration and sign up there.

*NOTE: Attendees are invited to peruse the art exhibition **Risky Beauty: Aesthetics and Climate Change**, next door at the Annenberg School for Communication forum and plaza lobby. Hours: Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*



**Mini-Workshops**

9:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Mini-Workshop 1. **Next-Level Community Engagement: Tools and Strategies for Growing Environmental News Audiences**

**Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for Communication, 5th Floor**

Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.

Bring an open mind (and some coffee, if you like) to this fun, interactive mini-workshop. We're highlighting non-traditional ways for journalists to reach people who may not yet be paying attention to environmental news. Meet in small groups with colleagues as they share experiences with in-person events, a crowdsourced anthology, TikTok-style videos, artificial intelligence and wildly successful newsletters. Bring lots of questions, plus your own ideas and experiences. Let's help each other and get creative about delivering environmental news.

**SCHEDULE****Welcome and Overview**

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.

We'll have a fun, fast-paced introduction to four ideas for engaging new audiences: newsletters, videos, events and Artificial Intelligence.

**9:30 – 9:40 a.m. We ask participants to co-create the rest of the session** by silently sharing ideas on notes that they stick to posters placed around the room. The poster will have questions such as:

What experience would you like to share related to (newsletters, videos, audience engagement or Artificial Intelligence)?

What's your biggest question related to (newsletters, videos, audience engagement or Artificial Intelligence)?

What's your most surprising take-away from the initial presentation about (newsletters, videos, audience engagement or Artificial Intelligence)?

What should SEJ do to help with (newsletters, videos, audience engagement or Artificial Intelligence)?

**Roundtable Discussions With Speakers**

9:40 – 11:00 a.m.

Move among the roundtables as you like, with change encouraged every 17 minutes.

**Table 1. Newsletters**

Short speaker presentations will be followed by q & a.

*Moderator:*

**Julie Halpert**, Independent Journalist and Journalism Instructor

*Speakers:*

**Emily Atkin**, Editor-in-Chief, HEATED

**Yessenia Funes**, Editor-at-Large, Atmos; Founding Member, The Uproot Project; and Columnist, Society of Environmental Journalists



## Table 2. TikTok and Other Short Videos

Short speaker presentations will be followed by q & a.

*Moderator:*

**Kristin Hugo**, Freelance Science Journalist and Author, MIT Press (“Carcass: On the Afterlives of Animal Bodies” – Spring 2025)

*Speakers:*

**Lucia Torres**, Video Manager, Mongabay

## Table 3. Audience Engagement, Partnerships and Creative Approaches to Reaching New Audiences

Short speaker presentations will be followed by q & a.

*Moderator:*

**Rachel Glickhouse**, Director of Partnerships, Grist

*Speakers:*

**Leia Larsen**, Water and Land Use Reporter, The Salt Lake Tribune and Great Salt Lake Collaborative

**Michael Leveton**, Community Outreach Manager, High Country News

## Table 4. Innovative Ways for Environmental Journalists To Use AI

Short speaker presentations will be followed by q & a.

*Moderator:*

**Emilia Askari**, Journalist, Teacher, Researcher – Lecturer II, University of Michigan

*Speakers:*

**John Pasmore**, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, FutureSum AI

**Matt Post**, Co-Founder, The LocalLens and Co-Organizer, March for Our Lives Movement

**11:00 a.m.** Thanks and reflection on key takeaways. How can SEJ support engagement of new people with environmental news? We invite everyone to “workshop” their creative ideas during roundtable discussions at lunch.

**11:15 a.m.** Break; pick up box lunches.

**11:30 a.m.** This session continues, in the same room.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

## Mini-Workshop 2. Crafting Impactful Environmental Narratives: Leveraging Communication Science, Visuals and Technology in Storytelling

**Location: University Suite, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

How can we incorporate insights from psychological research, best practices for visual journalism and new technologies into our reporting? In this hands-on workshop, we’ll (a) share evidence-based principles from communication, psychology and neuroscience for journalists to craft memorable messages that will be widely shared and motivate action; (b) explore key skills and approaches used by AP Climate photo, video and data visualization teams; and (c) present the use of drones as a way we can leverage technologies to elevate coverage of environmental issues. Through discussion and interactive activities, attendees will apply these strategies to example cases, with the opportunity to connect with others seeking to increase the impact of environmental narratives.

*Moderator:*

**Emily Falk**, Vice Dean, Annenberg School for Communication and Professor of Communication, Psychology, and Marketing, University of Pennsylvania

*Speakers:*

**Max Chesnes**, Environment Reporter, Tampa Bay Times

**Alyssa Goodman**, Climate Photo Editor, The Associated Press

**Alyssa Sinclair**, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Pennsylvania



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Mini-Workshop 3. Beyond Climate Change: Reporting on the Global Polycrisis, Its Roots and Solutions

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 1 – 2, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Scientists say we’re in a planetary emergency, yet most environmental journalism reports within the tight confines of dominant cultural assumptions — focusing on one problem (like climate change), or solution (cutting emissions), while ignoring intertwined environmental, social and cultural issues stemming from global ecological degradation. That leaves the public and policymakers without needed information to address this polycrisis. As journalists, it’s our challenge and responsibility to cover complex worldviews. We’ll introduce ecological systems theory, planetary boundaries, alternative economics (doughnut and circular models), traditional knowledge, deep adaptation and rights of nature. We’ll discuss how to pitch, report and write about these potentially game-changing worldviews.

*Moderator:*

**Erica Gies**, Independent Journalist; National Geographic Explorer; and Author, “Water Always Wins”

*Speakers:*

**Rico Moore**, Freelance Journalist and Member, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists (virtual)  
**Glenn Scherer**, Global Editor-at-Large, Mongabay  
**Tegan Wendland**, Editorial Director, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Mini-Workshop 4. Nearby and Far Away: What Local Reporting and Global Investigative Collaborations Can Learn From One Another

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 3, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

On-the-ground local television reporting and globe-spanning climate investigations have more in common than you might think. In this session, Covering Climate Now, Mongabay and the Pulitzer Center’s Rainforest Investigations Network will go behind the scenes to show different approaches to the climate story, and share tips on how to convert a local collaboration into a global project, and vice versa. We’ll provide video clips of excellent work, explain how stories came together and explore the common themes of excellent climate journalism, no matter the format.

**SCHEDULE**

#### Welcome and Introduction of Moderators

**9:00 a.m.**

**Kyle Pope**, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Covering Climate Now

#### Climate and the Local Angle

**9:05 a.m.**

*Moderator:*

**Elena Gonzalez**, Engagement Manager, Covering Climate Now





*Speakers:*

**Ana Bueno**, Environmental Reporter, Univision 45 Houston and #SEJ2024 Diversity Fellow  
**Tevin Wooten**, Meteorologist, NBC10 Boston

**Climate and Global Collaborations****9:45 a.m.***Moderator:*

**Marina Walker Guevara**, Executive Editor, Pulitzer Center

*Speakers:*

**Sasha Chavkin**, Senior Reporter, The Examination and Fellow, Pulitzer Center's Rainforest Investigations Network

**Eduardo Goulart de Andrade**, Editor, Brazil, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and #SEJ2024 Diversity Travel Fellow, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Karla Mendes**, Investigative Reporter, Mongabay (Brazil-based); Fellow, Pulitzer Center's Rainforest Investigations Network; and Second Vice President and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Lessons Learned From Local to Global and Vice****Versa****10:25 a.m.****Q&A****10:40 a.m.**

Image courtesy of Dreamstime

**Mini-Workshop 5. Covering Plastics:  
At the Tipping Point**

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 4,  
Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Decisions this year from the local level to the United Nations could go a long way to determining the future of plastics. This extended session will focus on what journalists need to know to cut through misinformation and greenwashing so they can report accurately and

comprehensively on a problem that the United Nations has called part of a triple planetary threat of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Discussion topics will include plastics and health, environmental justice, chemical recycling, legislation and the effort to secure a UN plastics treaty.

*Organizers:*

**James Bruggers**, Reporter, Inside Climate News  
**Tik Root**, Senior Writer, Grist

*Moderators:*

**James Bruggers**, Reporter, Inside Climate News  
**Sharon Lerner**, Investigative Reporter, ProPublica

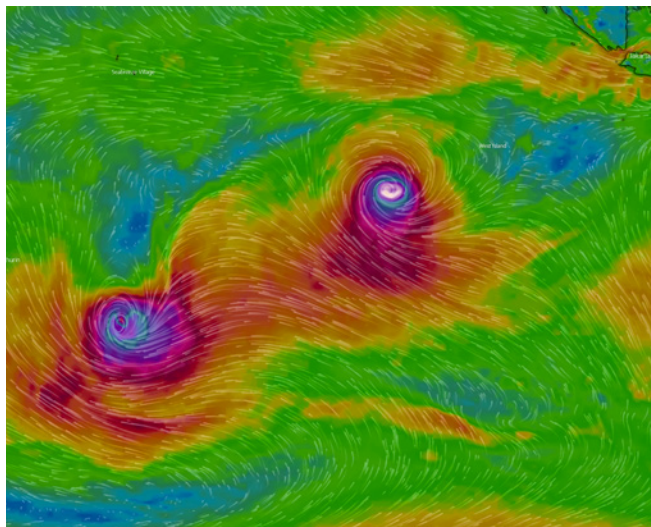
*Speakers:*

**Yvette Arellano**, Founder/ Director, Fenceline Watch  
**Grant Cope**, Senior Counselor to the Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
**Ross Eisenberg**, President, America's Plastic Makers, American Chemistry Council  
**Judith Enck**, President, Beyond Plastics and former Region 2 Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



**Leonardo Trasande**, Jim G. Hendrick, M.D. Professor of Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, and Professor, Department of Population Health, Grossman School of Medicine, New York University

Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Mini-Workshop 6. How To Turn Environmental and Disaster Data Into Stories

**Location: Benjamin Franklin Ballroom 5, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Federal agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have an enormous amount of data in hard-to-find, hard-to-interpret environmental and disaster databases. But once dissected, these datasets can be used to identify communities most vulnerable to air pollution, uncover critical issues such as racial inequities in the federal government’s flood insurance program and produce stories that hold federal, state and local officials and polluters accountable. Join this session to hear tips, tricks and tools from journalists utilizing these databases to tell important stories.

*Moderator:*

**Gloria Gonzalez**, Deputy Energy Editor, POLITICO

*Speakers:*

**Dillon Bergin**, Data Reporter, MuckRock

**Jessie Blaeser**, Data and Graphics Reporter, POLITICO

**Thomas Frank**, Reporter, POLITICO E&E

**Savanna Strott**, Project Manager and Reporter, Public Health Watch



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Mini-Workshop 7. Using Public Records To Follow the Money in Environmental Stories

**Location: William Penn Suite, Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel**

Corporate greed and political corruption are often at the heart of environmental stories. Public records can be critical in bringing wrongdoing to light. This workshop will discuss examples of how public records have exposed corporate activity in the pursuit of profits over the environment and human health, and brought dark money to light. You’ll get tips on where to find useful public records, how to track dark money, and how to use the Freedom of Information Action to get the info no one wants you to see.

*Moderator:*

**Tim Wheeler**, Associate Editor/Senior Writer, Bay Journal and Chair, Freedom of Information Task Force, Society of Environmental Journalists

*Speakers:*

**Mario Ariza**, Investigative Reporter, Floodlight

**Natasha Gilbert**, Freelance Journalist

**Paula Knudsen Burke**, Local Legal Initiative Attorney for Pennsylvania, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

**Gunita Singh**, Staff Attorney, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

**Charlie Spatz**, Research Manager, Energy and Policy Institute



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Mini-Workshop 8.

#### Decarbonizing Transportation: A Reporter's Guide

**Location: Room 109, Annenberg School for Communication, 1st Floor**

Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security station and into the lobby, proceed down the ramp. Room 109 will be the second classroom on the left.

Transportation is America's biggest source of carbon emissions. It's also a many-headed beast that is difficult to comprehend. This mini-workshop simplifies three big trends, so you're ready to dive in. First, we look at the transition to electric vehicles – and how to unpack it into stories for your community or beat. Then, we'll talk about the role that building out public transit and walkable (and bikeable) cities can play in reducing carbon emissions while improving citizens' quality of life, and hear how cities around the world are supporting those changes. Finally, we'll delve into New York City's efforts to become the first city in the U.S. to implement congestion pricing to reduce traffic, improve air quality and raise funds to support mass transit, and the promise congestion pricing may hold for other cities that want to explore the model. You won't want to miss these discussions with experienced reporters and top policymakers. Tipsheets provided.

### SCHEDULE

#### Panel 1.

#### How to Cover Electric Vehicles in Your Community

9:00 – 10:05 a.m.

*Moderators:*

**David Ferris**, Reporter, E&E News/POLITICO

**Alejandro Lazo**, Climate Reporter, CalMatters

*Speakers:*

**Nick Nigro**, Founder, Atlas Public Policy

**Liane Randolph**, Chair, California Air Resources Board

10:05 – 10:10 a.m. Break

#### Panel 2. The Rise of Walkable Cities: Covering Public Transit and Micromobility as Climate Solutions

10:10 – 11:15 a.m.

*Moderator:*

**Whitney Bauck**, Freelance Climate Reporter

*Speakers:*

**Burhan Azeem**, Councillor, City of Cambridge, Mass.

**Jerome Horne**, Transit Influencer

**Kea Wilson**, Senior Editor, Streetsblog USA

11:15 – 11:30 a.m. Break; pick up box lunches.

11:30 a.m. This workshop continues with Panel 3 in the same room.

#### Bookstore

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The University of Pennsylvania bookstore is on site to sell SEJ member-attendees' and speakers' books, as well as offering environmental books handpicked for the SEJ conference.

#### Networking Lunch

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Location: Plaza/Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Join a topic table or one of the lunch breakout sessions below. Check the web agenda or Whova app for the topic list and table map.



## Lunch Breakout Sessions

### Breakout 1. Drop-In Networking Opportunity Focused on Engaging New Audiences

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

**Location: Room 500, Annenberg School for Communication, 5th Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security desk, continue into the lobby, and make a right to the elevator room. Take the elevator to the 3rd floor. Exit the elevator, make a right, another right, and then a left toward a set of double doors. Take the double doors and follow the corridor to the end. The elevator is on the right. Take it to the 5th floor to get to room 500.*

**This session is a continuation of this morning's Mini-Workshop 1. Next-Level Community Engagement: Tools and Strategies for Growing Environmental News Audiences, 9:00 – 11:15 a.m.**

**New participants welcome!** Following a short, sweet recap of the morning's conversations, everyone is invited to roundtable conversations with the speakers. Now is the time to get supportive feedback on your ideas about engaging new audiences. Bring your questions about newsletters you'd like to start or grow; ways to create short, engaging videos; events or chapbooks you'd like to develop; how your newsroom can use the AI tools our speakers have pioneered. Stay at one table, or move around.

### Breakout 2. Decarbonizing Transportation: A Reporter's Guide

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

**Location: Room 109, Annenberg School for Communication, 1st Floor**

*Enter the building through the Walnut Street doors. Once you pass the security station and into the lobby, proceed down the ramp. Room 109 will be the second classroom on the left.*

**This is a continuation of this morning's Mini-Workshop 8, 9:00 – 11:15 a.m.**

## Panel 3. Policy Deep Dive: New York's Implementation of Congestion Pricing

**New participants welcome!**

*Moderator:*

**Caroline Spivack**, Reporter, Crain's New York Business

*Speakers:*

**Mary Barber**, Climate and Transportation Consultant

**Juliette Michaelson**, Deputy Chief External Relations Officer, State of New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Betsy Plum**, Executive Director, Riders Alliance

## Exhibits

11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Location: Lobby, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Don't miss the wealth of information offered by the 2024 exhibitors. Learn about environmental issues and innovations, see some great displays and add to your source list.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



## Closing Plenary

### Battling Disinformation, Fending Off Despair and Staying Relevant: What's the Future for Environmental Journalism?

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Location: Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Environmental journalism — much like the news business more broadly — is in a state of flux. An increasingly urgent climate crisis combined with an evolving media landscape have raised big questions that linger over our profession and our beat. In this session, we'll grapple with some of those big-picture issues. We'll explore the best ways to combat the ever-present climate disinformation and consider evolving views on journalistic objectivity. We'll consider how to cope with the feeling of despair. And we'll also look at how some journalists and outlets have created new business models to fund their journalism.

Emcee:

**Meg McGuire**, Founder, Delaware Currents and #SEJ2024 Conference Chair

Moderator:

**Justin Worland**, Senior Correspondent, TIME Magazine

Speakers:

**Emilia Askari**, Journalist, Teacher, Researcher – Lecturer II, University of Michigan

**Emily Atkin**, Editor-in-Chief, HEATED

**Tony Barboza**, Editorial Writer, Los Angeles Times; and Treasurer and Finance Chair, Board of Directors, Society of Environmental Journalists

**Mark Schleifstein**, Environment Reporter, The Times-Picayune | The New Orleans Advocate

## Mini-Tours

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

This year we'll be opening up registration online for the mini-tours beginning March 26. Stay tuned for more details.

1. **Urban Farming, Food and Land Sovereignty, and Environmental Justice**
2. **Urban Hiking: Explore Wissahickon Valley Park**
3. **Chasing Justice: Compromised Air Quality and Climate Vulnerability in Philadelphia**
4. **Buses, Trains and Trolleys: Philly's Mass Trans**
5. **Sniffer Dogs, Invasives and Rare Plants**
6. **Biking the Circuit: Trail Networks As a Green and Healthier Option?**
7. **Carbon Neutrality on an Urban Campus**
8. **The Philly Heat Pump Lab: Electrification, Efficiency and the Home Energy Transition**



Image courtesy of Dreamstime



### Dinner and Dance Party at the Brooklyn Bowl

7:30 – 10:30 p.m. (\$60 fee)

Location: 1009 Canal St, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Bus transportation will be provided from all four hotels starting at 7:00 p.m.

SEJ’s 2024 Saturday night party at the **Brooklyn Bowl** includes dinner buffet, bowling, shoe rental and band **Pure Harmony Project!** Space is limited. Preregistration required.

 **Sunday, April 7, 2024**

### Bookstore

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The University of Pennsylvania bookstore is on site at Heinz NWR to sell SEJ member-attendees’ and speakers’ books, as well as offering environmental books handpicked for the SEJ conference.

### Breakfast, Books and Birds

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (\$25 fee includes admission, beverages, continental breakfast and airport transportation with arrival at airport no later than 1:00 p.m., then to the hotels)

Tour the **John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum**, established in 1972 to protect Pennsylvania’s largest remaining freshwater tidal marsh and the birds and other wildlife that depend on this habitat. It was also designated a Priority Urban Wildlife Refuge in 2014, promoting habitat protection to benefit both humans and wildlife. When you’re not seeing or hearing birds, you’ll be hearing stories about them and other wildlife, as well as getting writing tips from a panel of natural history authors. **Preregistration and tour selection required.**

Emcee:

**Meg McGuire**, Founder, Delaware Currents and #SEJ2024 Conference Chair

### AGENDA

**8:00 a.m.** Buses depart from hotels to Heinz NWR

### Coffee and Breakfast Snacks

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Session 1. Reporting on Non-Human Lives To Illuminate Our Own

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

This session is concurrent with Tour 1.

This panel will focus on the practice, ethics and value of reporting on and centering non-human life, with the goal of using those stories and metaphors to illuminate



our interconnected world. From cognition to physics, social justice to biodiversity loss, researchers in this field are radically upending classical notions of power and agency, which could have powerful implications as life on this planet is challenged. This panel will provide perspective and tips on how reporters can broaden definitions of which lives hold value and deserve protection, work that can ultimately help transform our world in this moment of crisis.

*Moderator:*

**Karen Pinchin**, Independent Journalist and Author, "Kings of Their Own Ocean: Tuna, Obsession, and the Future of Our Seas"

*Speakers:*

**Nancy Castaldo**, Journalist and Author, "Sniffer Dogs: How Dogs (and Their Noses) Save the World," "Back From the Brink," "Beastly Brains" and "The Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale"

**Sabrina Imbler**, Staff Writer, Defector Media and Author, "How Far the Light Reaches"

**Barbara "Bluejay" Michalski**, Chief, Keeper of Culture, Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania

**Carl Safina**, Ecologist and Author, "Alfie & Me: What Owls Know, What Humans Believe"

was established, through community action, and the resources that are protected at John Heinz NWR at Tinicum. The refuge is one of the most renowned birding spots in Pennsylvania, boasting the largest remaining tidal marsh in the state, against the backdrop of one of the largest metropolitan cities in the U.S. It has also become very much a National Wildlife Refuge that is more part of the community, and not that space "out there".

*Tour Leader:*

**Lamar Gore**, Refuge Manager, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

### Beverage and Snack Break

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.

Image courtesy of Darby Creek Valley Association



### Tour 1. Tidal Marsh Birding at Heinz NWR

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

This tour is concurrent with Session 1.

Learn about America's First Urban Refuge, how it



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

### Session 2. The Faith + Earth Beat: A Template for News at the Intersection of Religion and Environment

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This session is concurrent with Tour 2.

Reporters are often confined to beats such as "religion" or "environment." A panel of Pennsylvania faith leaders working on environmental issues will share about their initiatives and challenges and discuss the nuances of navigating and acting on environmental issues within their religious traditions. We'll dig into what motivates or dissuades people in their communities from



environmental action and hear how leaders address the moral component in many environmental issues. Reporters will leave with a heightened awareness of this underreported “beat” as well as a template for reporting environment and religion stories for local or national news outlets across the country.

*Moderators (recent fellows from the Religion and Environment Story Project at Boston University):*  
**Rebecca Randall**, Independent Journalist  
**Julia Shipley**, Investigative Journalist

*Speakers:*  
**Julian Burnett**, Philadelphia neighborhood green energy advocate affiliated with Catholic-based ECO Philly focused on energy justice and Senior Community Partnerships Manager, PosiGen  
**Eileen Flanagan**, former Board Chair, Earth Quaker Action Team, Spiritual Writer and Speaker  
**Israel Harris**, Advocacy Director, Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (Scranton, Pa.)  
**Katie Ruth**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light

of environmental injustices for decades. The refuge works with the community in three areas to break down barriers between the refuge and the community, which are engagement, education and connecting. What we have learned on this journey is the depth of injustices impacting our communities. This tour will address the injustices faced, the impact on the community and how we work with the community to navigate barriers to success.

*Tour Leader:*  
**Lamar Gore**, Refuge Manager, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

**SEJ’s annual conference ends at noon. Buses will go first to the airport, arriving no later than 1:00 p.m., then to the hotels.**

Image courtesy of Wikipedia



## Tour 2. “Knowing” Our Communities and Breaking Down Barriers

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

This tour is concurrent with Session 2.

The refuge has been on a journey of “knowing” three target communities, who have been facing a variety





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The Society of Environmental Journalists is grateful to all whose personal efforts and financial support have made SEJ's 2024 Annual Conference possible.



## SEJ 2024 CONFERENCE HOST

The University of Pennsylvania faculty and staff including:

**Kathleen Hall Jamieson**, Director, Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC)

**Michael Mann**, Director, Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, & the Media (PCSSM)

**Dawn Bonnell**, Senior Vice Provost for Research

**Sarah Banet-Weiser**, Dean, Annenberg School for Communication

**Beth Jamieson**, Director of Events and Guest Services, and her team at Penn Live Arts

**Jeff Barta**, General Manager, Penn Hospitality Services

**Katie Unger Baillie**, Interim Director, Penn's Environmental Innovations Initiative

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**Meg McGuire**, Founder, Delaware Currents

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## Consultants and Advisors

**Frances Backhouse**, Assistant Editor, SEJournal

**Christine Bruggers**, Senior Advisor, Awards and Elections (retired)

**Joseph A. Davis**, SEJournal Writer/Section Editor; Editor, EJToday

**Adam Glenn**, Editor, SEJournal and Editorial Director, Publications

**Cindy MacDonald**, Web Content Manager

**Beth Parke**, Founding Executive Director

**Meaghan Parker**, Senior Advisor; Chair, SEJ Future Council

## Conference Support

**Rylie Gregston, Josie Hernandez, Debbie Jennings, Martin Jimenez, Zofia Lajer-Burcharth, Ashley Pencak, Dale Willman**

Thank You to **SEJ Volunteers and Partners**. SEJ could not have produced this conference without the dozens of members who generously donated their time and energy to organize sessions, moderate panels, lead tours, recruit sponsors and support multimedia.

Special thanks to **Emilia Askari, Kyle Bagenstose, Adam Glenn, Emily Holden, Frank Kummer, Karla Mendes, Bernardo Motta, Annie Ropeik, Sammy Roth, Sara Shipley Hiles, Amy Westervelt and Feini Yin**.

SEJ is grateful for the partnership of The Uproot Project on the #SEJ2024 Diversity Travel Fellowships, and welcomes their leaders and members to #SEJ2024.

For more about The Uproot Project and how to join, visit: <https://uprootproject.org/>

SEJ is grateful for its partners, the Association of Health Care Journalists and Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, on the Science, Health, Environment Reporting Fellowship.

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**James Detjen**, Knight Professor of Journalism Emeritus and Founding Director, Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, Michigan State University (retired)

## The Society of Environmental Journalists



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**STRENGTHENING THE QUALITY, REACH  
AND VIABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
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ADVANCE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF  
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## SEJ COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

All attendees at SEJ's annual conference must be up-to-date on their vaccinations and boosters as defined by the CDC and must attest to that fact. If they are unable to be vaccinated for medical or religious reasons, they must have a negative PCR test result within 72 hours of the event or a negative antigen test 24 hours before. Anyone experiencing symptoms should take a rapid antigen test and get a negative result before joining the event. If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any symptoms of COVID, we strongly encourage you to avoid attending the event or wear a mask. SEJ will continue to provide masks for those in need. We also ask that attendees at our events agree to test for COVID if symptomatic and disclose the results to SEJ ([sejesej.org](http://sejesej.org)). If SEJ becomes aware that an attendee of an event tests positive for COVID, it will disclose to attendees via an email to all attendees – with full respect to privacy – that a positive case has been detected.

## SEJ ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

SEJ is committed to maintaining an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity without harassment. Toward this end, SEJ prohibits and condemns discrimination and all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and harassment based on an individual's race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, military or veteran status or any other legally-protected characteristics.

This strict policy means that no form of unlawful or prohibited discriminatory or harassing conduct by or towards any SEJ employee, member, board member, speaker or invited guest, exhibitor, event attendee, vendor or contractor or volunteer will be tolerated. This policy should not be construed as applicable to events not organized by SEJ or non-SEJ forums or workplaces which it does not control.

SEJ is committed to enforcing its policy at all levels within SEJ and at SEJ events. Any employee, member, board member, speaker or invited guest, exhibitor, event attendee, vendor or contractor or volunteer who engages in prohibited discrimination or harassment will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate removal from any applicable SEJ-organized functions, activities or events, removal from leadership or committee positions or expulsion from SEJ consistent with its member expulsion policy.

Unless otherwise excluded, the term "harassment" within this policy includes prohibited discrimination. Anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies for employees are covered by SEJ's separate employment handbook.

**Conduct Covered by This Policy:** This policy applies to and prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination in the course of SEJ's work or activities. This includes any harassment or discrimination that may occur as part of SEJ activities, whether in person, in writing, via phone or through any online platforms, including but not limited to systems hosted or moderated by SEJ.

### **Harassment or discrimination may take many forms, including but not limited to the following:**

- ▲ Verbal conduct, such as epithets, derogatory comments and slurs.
- ▲ Displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings or gestures.
- ▲ Physical conduct, such as assault or blocking normal movement unnecessarily.
- ▲ Yelling at or threatening speakers and other participants (verbally or physically).
- ▲ Offensive or unwelcome advances and invitations, regardless of whether they involve physical contact, or if the harassed individual submits to the invitation.
- ▲ Offensive or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including sexually graphic spoken or written comments, offensive comments transmitted by email or another messaging system, or offensive or suggestive images or graphics, whether physically present or sent over the Internet or displaying or using sexually suggestive objects in an offensive manner.
- ▲ Offensive or unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, including the touching of another's body or the touching or display of one's own body in a sexual manner.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prevent a critical discussion of or education relating to sexual harassment or different forms of discrimination. SEJ is strongly committed to diversity, equity and the free expression of ideas. Critical disagreements or conflicting beliefs and viewpoints do not alone constitute harassment. Sexual imagery or language in a professional discussion might not constitute harassment. Speakers and sponsors are asked to be aware of how language or images may be perceived by others. Participants may exercise their option to leave a session or a conversation.

Computer Messaging and Information Systems: Employees, members, board members, speakers or invited guests, exhibitors, event attendees, vendors or contractors or volunteers are reminded that data generated on, stored in or transmitted to or from SEJ's computers, websites and listservs remain the property of SEJ for all purposes. SEJ retains the right to monitor its computers, computer systems, listservs, networks, websites and social media accounts to ensure compliance with this requirement.

### **Procedures in Cases of Harassment or Discrimination:**

SEJ is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and will make every reasonable effort to promptly and completely address any harassment that may occur. However, SEJ cannot take prompt and effective remedial action unless each incident of harassment is reported immediately.

Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination of any kind within the meaning of this policy should report the incident immediately or as soon as possible to SEJ's Executive Director or the President of SEJ's Board of Directors. Violations that occur at an SEJ event also may be reported directly to the organizers of the event. Anyone else who observes conduct that they believe is in violation of this policy also is encouraged to report the conduct in the same manner.

Any individual making a claim of harassment or discrimination should provide as much information as possible about the details of the incident or incidents, name or names of the individuals involved, the names of any witnesses, and any written, electronic or physical evidence. Reporting should be made without any fear of retaliation. Retaliation against any employee, member, board member, speaker or invited guest, exhibitor, event attendee, vendor or contractor or volunteer for reporting harassment will not be tolerated.

SEJ will take appropriate, thorough, independent and prompt action in response to any reports of harassment or discrimination in whatever context or circumstances they arise under this policy. Such reports will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee whose voting members shall consist of the following: the President of SEJ's Board of Directors and the chairs of SEJ's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and its Membership Committee or their designees, provided that all such voting members must also be members of SEJ's Board of Directors who are not involved in the dispute. The ad hoc committee may also consult or discuss the matter with SEJ's Executive Director.

The ad hoc committee will use good faith efforts to the extent practicable to maintain confidentiality as it conducts its investigation and deliberations. The complaining party and the accused will be informed of the results of the investigation, with timing up to the discretion of the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will notify the full Board of Directors about any complaints at the next Board Meeting, but due to privacy concerns the level of detail will be at the discretion of the ad hoc committee.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, violators at events may be summarily expelled from the event without further review at the discretion of SEJ event organizers.



# #SEJ2025



“Welcome to Arizona State University, a new kind of 21st century university dedicated to simultaneously advancing quality education for all and creating a more sustainable future through collaborative innovation. From pioneering research in water security, renewable energy and ocean science to interdisciplinary work in climate resilience, ASU is a leader in teaching, learning and discovery designed to ensure our planet thrives through current and future challenges. We look forward to showcasing the groundbreaking work of the world’s first Global Futures Laboratory, and engaging in thought-provoking discussions about our relationship with the Earth.”

Michael M. Crow  
Regents Distinguished President, Arizona State University  
and Distinguished Global Futures Scientist

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