



## SEJ 2014 Annual Report of Activities

The Society of Environmental Journalists strengthened environmental news reporting in 2014 by connecting, educating and empowering news professionals who deliver coverage across all media platforms. Thousands of journalists, students and educators increased their working knowledge this year, through learning opportunities provided by SEJ conferences, as well as other training events and publications. Tens of thousands of news reports were generated or informed through events, publications, peer training and mini-grants supporting work on specific topics. Volunteers continued to power SEJ programs. The organization gained new members, new board directors and new partners for future work.

### SEJ Annual Conferences

The 24th Annual Conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists took place in New Orleans, Louisiana, hosted and sponsored by a group of foundations, universities and media companies. Mark Schleifstein, Pulitzer Prize-winning environment reporter for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune and veteran SEJ member, chaired the program agenda. Other journalists working in print, online and broadcast media in the region served as volunteer tour and session leaders. Journalists not already involved with the Society of Environmental Journalists were recruited.

More than 700 people participated in SEJ' comprehensive agenda of sessions, tours and special events September 3-7 including 350 journalists, students, and educators. Speakers and other attendees included scientists, government officials, business representatives, environmental leaders, exhibitors and others concerned with news coverage of environmental science and policy issues. Journalists left the conference motivated and empowered with story leads, new insights, contacts, research data, experiences and enhanced skills for effective storytelling. Speakers and exhibitors left the conference with good experiences and useful contacts with knowledgeable journalists who cover their issues. [Full agenda and press coverage.](#)

### Publications, Website, and FOI WatchDog Project

SEJ publications, created by journalists for journalists, were well received and put to good use this year. Google analytics about <http://sej.org> show that SEJ's website attracted more than 118,000 unique visitors over the last 12 months, an 18% increase from 2013 data. Our annotated daily-news digest *EJToday*, bi-weekly *Freedom of Information Watchdog TipSheet* and quarterly *SEJournal* were distributed to several thousand journalists, students, educators and subscribers of varied descriptions through email and RSS feeds. At year-end, SEJ's Twitter feed @SEJorg had 10,800 followers.

In 2014 SEJ's Freedom of Information WatchDog Project monitored, reported and acted on a variety of FOI and open-government issues relevant to environmental news coverage through:

- 26 issues of *FOI WatchDog Edition TipSheet*

- Negotiation and public-outrage campaigns for improved press policies at EPA, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and other agencies
- Peer coaching on deadline topics using SEJ's communications platforms
- Public statements on key issues and coalition work with other journalism groups FOIA training and FOI discussions in the annual conference sessions and tours.

For more about SEJ's FOI efforts, see the [website](#).

### **Mini-Grants and Journalism Awards**

SEJ received more than 115 grant applications and distributed nearly \$26,000 in mini-grants for expenses supporting journalism projects in 2014. Many thanks to the Grantham Foundation and generous individual donors for supporting the Fund for Environmental Journalism. [Grant program guidelines and grantees](#).

SEJ Awards for Reporting on Environment rewarded excellence in environmental reporting in print, broadcast and online media, to increase the work's visibility to new audiences and media gatekeepers. [Awards program rules and past winners](#).

### **SEJ Regional Events**

SEJ Regional Events took place across North America this year. In January 2014, SEJ hosted and live streamed The Year Ahead, a panel preview of emerging issues at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington DC. In April 2014 we organized a preview and phone Q/A with producers of Showtime's Years of Living Dangerously and a story "pitch slam" with editors in Sacramento, CA. In June 2014 we organized a 3-day Specialized Reporting Institute (SRI) in Pittsburgh, PA. The project included multiple interactive panels, PA drill site tour, and July Webinar on fracking, shale gas and oil development for Poynter's News University (<http://newsu.org>) where it continues to serve journalists. Program supervisors with Poynter have let us know that SEJ's Pittsburgh workshop was the most highly rated and highest impact SRI in that program's history.

SEJ members in Boston, Washington DC, New York, Toronto and Seattle organized informal SEJ meet-ups and pub nights. SEJ members contributed regularly to the listserv of the Mexican environmental journalists network and we collaborated on some programs with Earth Journalism Network. In November SEJ co-sponsored a science journalism seminar at The Poynter Institute in St. Pete, organized in conjunction with the Blue Ocean Film Festival. Members also convened informally in November in conjunction with a conference on sustainable food system issues in upstate New York. We've been working to improve online member directory search functions, to make it easier for members to find each other and get together locally. Read more about SEJ's efforts to educate and network journalists through regional events [here](#).

### **SEJ Diversity Task Force**

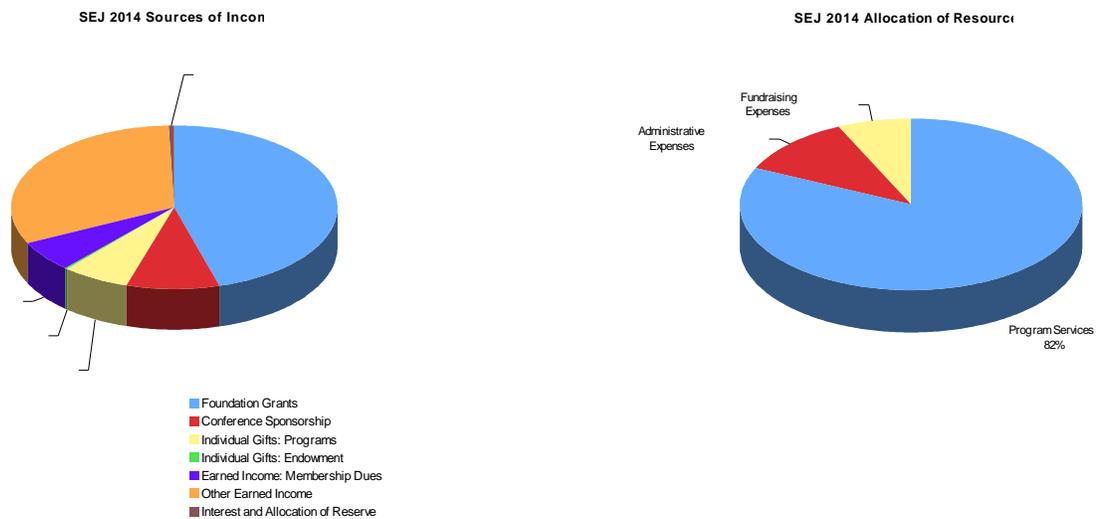
SEJ Diversity Task Force, powered by member-volunteers researched progress so far, revisited goals for membership and speaker rosters and discussed obstacles to success. New volunteers have stepped forward to help with personal outreach to recruit colleagues. For the Oklahoma conference we have reached out to Xavier and Langston, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities. For Oklahoma, special emphasis is being given to Native American issues and connections with NAJA. This year we also continued to promote [SEJ's Guide to Diversity in Environmental Reporting](#), funded in 2013 through a Gannett project grant.

## SEJ's Mentoring Program for Journalists

SEJ's Mentor Program, a remarkable volunteer effort, matched 63 pairs of mentors and mentees for year-long relationships this year, in service to a variety of personalized goals. In the spring and summer of 2014 SEJ's mentor program was the beneficiary of a memorial fund that raised approximately \$25,000 from family and friends of beloved conservationist Elyssa Rosen. Thanks to the Fund, 11 mentor-mentee pairs were given the opportunity to attend SEJ's annual conference in New Orleans in September, some pairs meeting for the first time. Read more about SEJ's mentor program and the Elyssa Rosen Memorial Fund [here](#).

## 2014 Organizational Revenue and Allocation of Resources\*

In 2014 SEJ revenues included foundation grants, gifts from individuals, media and university sponsorships, gifts from individuals and earned income from dues, subscriptions and fees from conference registration, exhibitors and advertising. See the full list of contributors on SEJ's [website](#).



## Thanks to Our Generous Supporters

The board, staff and members of the Society of Environmental Journalists are grateful to our partners, funders, advertisers and individual donors for their generous and sustaining investment in our community and its mission. For our 25th anniversary, we offer you even more options for supporting our work: please make your tax-free donation on our secure website [here](#); or [advertise](#) on our website, in our publications, or through special press releases that you design. Thank you!

\*Unofficial report. SEJ's most recent tax filings may be found on the [website](#).