



2011 Annual Report of Activities

In 2011 SEJ provided reporters and editors with a network of colleagues, useful publications, learning opportunities and other organizational resources during an especially challenging time for both journalism and the environment. SEJ's member roster held steady at approximately 1,425 over the year despite trends in the field, and we saw no decrease in the number and quality of entries for SEJ awards and related contests. Our freelance category of members continued to increase as full-time positions were eliminated in many newsrooms, and we observed and supported the founding of a number of new nonprofit investigative and explanatory reporting studios in SEJ's constituency. SEJ delivered effective training to thousands of journalists, students, educators and others concerned with environmental news reporting, and enabled veterans on the beat to share what they know and assist newcomers, including those in general assignment and startup situations, or working on business or health stories, who were motivated to report in depth on environmental topics.

Major Accomplishments

SEJ's 21st Annual Conference, hosted by the University of Miami October 19 -23, 2011, was the organization's first truly hemispheric conference. Agenda co-chairs Jeff Burnside (WTVJ-NBC 6, Miami) and multi-media science journalist Angela Posada Swafford (*Muy Interesante*) designed a wildly successful program. This extraordinary series of events attracted 938 registrants including 402 journalists, students and faculty members, from the US, Mexico, Canada, 11 Latin American countries and 7 European countries.

SEJ members and collaborating partners offered 70+ events, including a rich menu of pre- and post-conference workshops and tours. A spectacular opening night featured five Cousteau Family members, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Carl Hiaasen, and a live video chat from Antarctica, with a biologist who is researching climate change impacts there. Other top speakers included Jane Lubchenco of NOAA, legendary marine biologist Sylvia Earle ("her deepness") and the head of the National Park Service.

Full-day tours were especially adventurous this year. Expert tour leaders and news sources took journalists diving on a coral reef, tagging wild sharks, visiting the National Hurricane Center, exploring the environmental impact of the sugar industry, sport fishing, focusing on Everglades cleanup and biodiversity in South Florida and much more. A post-conference tour gave more in-depth experiences for reporting on development, coral reefs and marine research in the Florida Keys. SEJ highlighted environmental issues in Cuba by offering a most unusual post-conference tour with scientists from an Oceans Foundation program.

Fifty concurrent sessions were offered on diverse environmental issues, including a special youth panel. Because of its location in South Florida the conference gave special focus to marine issues, from offshore drilling, to ocean pollution and acidification, Everglades restoration, and sustainable seafood. Scores of news stories resulted, internationally. *The Miami Planet*, a student-run online newspaper did an especially thorough job reporting highlights along with original stories on South Florida and its environment. See <http://bit.ly/dJtF2L> for details of agenda and coverage. Survey data from participants was collected and analyzed. Virtually all sessions, workshops and tours got high marks from attendees.

SEJ published new content tailored to the needs of journalists on a wide range of under-reported and emerging issues through sej.org, *SEJournal*, *TipSheet* and *Freedom of Information Watchdog TipSheet*, Twitter and *EJToday*, our daily news digest. At this writing the “SEJorg” Twitter account has more than 4,200 followers; in addition, SEJ members have worked together to create a group distribution of their own feeds thru Twitter, for a combined total of more than 75,000 “followers.” SEJ completed work on a mobile-device-friendly interface with our Web site. SEJ offered reporters resources for covering the tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan with Web-based information and member-to-member support in real time. SEJ’s *Durban Diary* shared information relevant to climate talks in South Africa in December.

SEJ’s Freedom of Information WatchDog Project worked in partnership with *Pro Publica* and the *Columbia Journalism Review* to survey journalists on government transparency, and co-sponsored a National Press Club discussion and Webcast event in early October 2011. SEJ provided regular original reporting on environment-related FOI issues through 26 issues of *FOI WatchDog Edition TipSheet*.

SEJ’s Fund for Environmental Journalism distributed mini-grants through two cycles of a competitive process, to help underwrite travel costs and other direct expenses of specific reporting projects. Even as general support grants to SEJ have become more difficult to win, this specific project is attracting new funding at an impressive rate. SEJ’s distributed approximately \$25,000 from the FEJ in 2011, underwriting direct expenses of 17 winning projects. Applicant profiles included nonprofit and for-profit newsrooms, individuals and collaborating teams working with limited resources.

SEJ Awards for Reporting on the Environment recognized excellence in environmental reporting in print, broadcast and online media, in large-market and small-market categories, to build the stature of the beat, increase its visibility and bring great work to the attention of new audiences and media gatekeepers.

SEJ’s Diversity Task Force was revived by member-volunteers this year, to engage new members and educate on issues of special interest to communities of color, with participation from members of UNITY groups: National Association of Black Journalists, Native American Journalists Association, Asian American Journalists Association and National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ). SEJ partnered in Miami with NAHJ on sessions and tours, and we continue working together for sessions at the 2012 Texas conference, including a session for UNITY 2012, the Annual Meeting of the 4 groups.

SEJ’s Freelance Task Force took on a number of projects, including set-up of a new directory of freelance members available to editors and publishers looking to hire them. Launched in February, the directory has already led to some new jobs for independent journalists. Veteran reporters in the SEJ membership continued to serve as mentors to newcomers in 2010 and 2011, in a variety of personalized relationships.

Collaborations and strategic partnerships were developed. SEJ’s premiere collaborating partner for 2011 was the University of Miami, especially its Rosensteil School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and School of Communication. A long list of remarkable people, institutions and programs were involved with our Miami meeting. See online agenda for details: <http://bit.ly/dJtF2L>. Special mention is due for the Pew Fellowship Program in Marine Conservation; National Association of Hispanic Journalists (a track of sessions in Miami); Americas Business Council Foundation; *Poder* magazine, Transatlantic Media Network of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (media fellowships); Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden; members of the Cousteau family and organizations they operate; and the Reynolds Center for Business Journalism at Arizona State University (a full day on covering the Green economy).

Media group collaboration is ongoing, including: the National Press Club; Poynter Institute for Media Studies; Society of Professional Journalists; Investigative Reporters and Editors; Association of Health Care Journalists; National Association of Science Writers; membership groups affiliated with the National Council of Journalism Organizations; and various groups involved with open government and right to know issues. In 2011 SEJ personnel also collaborated on various publications and programs with *NewsPro* magazine, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and the Metcalf Institute for Marine and Environmental Reporting at the University of Rhode Island.

SEJ established a working partnership with Michigan State University in 2011, to develop a workshop plan and proposal that was later funded by the National Science Foundation for work in 2012.

Finally, SEJ’s executive director served on a judging panel convened by the Scripps Howard Foundation’s National Journalism Awards program, to recognize the year’s best reporting on the environment.

SEJ staff established some new approaches to evaluation. In 2011 SEJ began asking members to report to us about community response to their own work, including audience comments, legal or policy changes, or any other results of their reporting. We also fine-tuned the questions we ask on surveys to elicit more nuanced information, and initiated new routines for journaling anecdotal evidence of the need for SEJ and outcomes from what we do. In preparation for budget discussions and possible new directions for SEJ in an era of vastly limited resources, SEJ staff and board solicited ideas for new programs of all kinds (not just conference sessions), to help us develop a fresh take of what we might best be doing with resources we are able to marshal for SEJ. In 2011 we did three surveys in-house and a poll in collaboration with *NewsPro* magazine, all of which have been used in review of program effectiveness, toward adjustments for future work.

2011 Sources and Allocation of Income

Over the last two decades, SEJ became well established through generous investments of general support from foundation underwriters. This funding has allowed the organization to grow and thrive in a dynamic professional field that prizes its independence and self-determined peer-led programs. The following charts show SEJ’s income streams and allocations for 2011. Current audited financial statements and 990s are also available on Guidestar and on SEJ’s webiste <http://sej.org>.

