

## Fort Collins Post-Conference Evaluation – Summary of Results

### Top-Line Results:

- 99% of survey respondents would recommend the conference to their colleagues
- 96% said the conference made them better equipped to cover environmental issues
- Respondents said networking offers the most value to attendees, followed by a deeper understanding of the issues, and story ideas.
- 43 percent said they would file stories from the conference.

### Conference Events:

- Workshops:
  - Covering Environmental Justice in the West: 92 percent Excellent or Very Good
  - Covering Climate Change: 96 percent Excellent or Very Good
  - Surviving Journalism: 82 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Plenary Sessions:
  - Opening reception and dinner: 75 percent Excellent or Very Good
  - Friday Opening Plenary on Public Lands: 87 percent Excellent or Very Good
  - Friday Lunch Plenary on the 2020 Election: 70 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Thursday tours: Almost every tour received mostly Excellent or Very Good rankings. “Farming on the Great Plains” and the “Seed and Semen Bank” both led the way with 100 percent Excellent or Very Good rankings.
- Thursday receptions: not rated, but the vast majority of comments were generally very positive
- Open Screen: 94 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Speed Mentoring Breakfast: 100 percent Excellent or Very Good
- The Beat Dinners were not rated individually this year; collectively they received 79 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Pitch Slam on U.S. Public Lands: 92 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Concurrent Session (panels): mostly Excellent or Very Good ratings.
  - The highest rated: Environmental Impacts of Cannabis and Leaky Mines; FOIA; Beyond False Balance; Soils and Earth and Greenhouse Gasses; Plastics and Climate Change; and Invisible Pollution, Invisible People.
  - The best attended sessions: Following the Money – 90, Beyond False Balance – 80, Renewables – 75, Solutions Journalism – 75, Seeing Environmentally – 70, and Covering Indian Country – 65.
- Saturday Awards Luncheon: 80 percent Excellent or Very Good responses
- Saturday mini-tours: mostly Excellent or Very Good reviews
- Saturday dinner and dance party at New Belgium: 82 percent Excellent or Very Good
- Sunday morning breakfast and authors session: 80 percent Excellent or Very Good

### Selected Open-Ended Responses:

“Year in and year out, it is the best journalism conference I attend.”

“It's absolutely the best conference for anyone covering the environment, whether you are new to the beat or more experienced. The story ideas and sources are excellent, as well as the training and networking.”

“The SEJ annual conference is a veritable smorgasbord of story ideas, sources and best practices for any reporter, whether on the environment beat or any of the many beats that nowadays involve environmental topics.”

“It's an incredible gathering of reporters, environmental organizations to network, gather sources, find stories, explore areas of interest, and most of all, a fun learning experience!”

“Really well organized, a great array of sessions, the hands-on tours were amazing, and everyone I met was engaging, enthusiastic, and collegial. “

“I liked the hands-on nature of many of the panels, and the opportunities to get outside for the tours and mini-tours. The latter were especially important for learning and getting to know the unique location where the conference was held.”

“Great way to get to know a new place and new sources in depth. Field trips and getting out into the community to explore issues with journalists who have researched the topic beforehand is a unique strength of this conference.”

“Much impressed by the production quality of this event in all respects -- advance material, website, quality of speakers, and especially the professionalism of the staff.”

“SEJ is consistently the best journalism conference I attend. Interesting, deep programming, and a very friendly, supportive, and inspiring group of attendees.”

“It is a great information source, and I see it as being on the cutting edge of covering the most important stories of our time. Those covering other subject areas simply do not understand what we're dealing with. Also, this is the first group of journos whose eyes did not glaze over when I mentioned indigenous media.”

“I found it very helpful to be reminded of things such as the power of FOIA or looking into newer ways to engage journalistically such as solutions journalism. It was also Good to see what publications and organizations are out there in the realm of environmental journalism.”

“It's a fantastic networking opportunity and a chance to dig deeper in topics I might not know much about. I always get story ideas, or leads. And it's fun.”

“I recommend this conference to people--both reporters and P.R. folks--all the time! It's always a great conference with many fantastic people, and it's so cool to be able to visit different parts of the country and learn about environmental issues I wouldn't normally have the opportunity to visit/learn about (respectively). I love that it's put on BY journalists FOR journalists--and also that people like me are allowed to come as welcome guests... It's actually the only conference I go to anymore--it's the only one I have ever found useful.”

“Great opportunity to network and put faces to names for those of us doing media outreach. Also great panels and deep dives on issues we cover/advocate for.”

“The networking opportunities are excellent, and the panels address so many important issues with a deep bench of experienced journalists and topic experts.”

“It is a very thorough and inspiring conference. I find both the content of the discussions as well as the networking and social opportunities to be great additions to my experience as a journalist. And for people traveling from far away, the conference organizers always make sure it is worth your while to make the visit, by arranging for in-depth tours of the community and landscape where the conference is located.”

“It is a well-run, highly relevant and inspirational conference- with enormous opportunity to interact with journalists from across the country, working on different platforms.”

“As a freelancer working without the support of a newsroom, it's helpful to have a network of colleagues and friends I can connect with in person at least once per year. The SEJ conference is a great way to network with fellow journalists, editors, and potential sources. And, you may get assignments from the conference, too. Several times over the years, I've received a story commission based on an introduction made at the SEJ conference.”

“It's dope networking. Best I've ever experienced at any conference, and I've been to tons, largely in NYC. So, well done!”

“Generated more story ideas than other conferences I usually go to and connected me with more relevant sources than other conferences I usually go to... People are also a little friendlier at this conference than at others I usually go to (like NASW or AAAS or AHCJ).”

“High caliber attendees, great speakers, CSU faculty were awesome, nice location, the student poster sessions were also excellent.”

“It's really valuable as an early/pre-career journalist to see that others are, in fact, doing the work I would like to do and making an impact.”

“Thoughtful, energizing, and absolutely the most hands-on, interactive, engaged journalism conference you can find. Also, has paths to participation for a lot of different kinds of people, interests, professional avenues.”

“It's an inspiring conference and it's also very well organized. The sessions are always relevant and I consistently learn new skills.”

“Amazing turnout, lots of great energy and enthusiasm, great story idea generation.”

“Best journalism conference in the world!”

“It's THE one.”