



Presentation Guidelines

The 2025 State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference will include two days of sessions, with an expected total attendance of over 650 people. Conference attendees will have a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise (ex: scientists, resource managers, city planners, policy makers, community organizers, students, etc.), so presentations should be accessible to a broad audience, including those who have little or no background in the subject matter. Please follow the guidelines below to ensure that your presentation receives the attention that it deserves!

Top-level Guidelines

- Avoid jargon wherever possible, including acronyms and technical terms. If it is necessary to include jargon, be sure to provide an explanation that is accessible to a general audience.
- If your talk describes new findings, be sure to provide the context and significance of the findings.
- Limit the use of detailed formulas in the presentation.
- Simplify tables and figures to avoid including too much information on one slide. Condense headings and data to what is relevant. When including graphics, use a rectangle the same color as the background to mask unnecessary information such as footnotes that will not be referenced.
- Practice your timing to avoid rushing through the summary and closing statement.
- Use the 16:9 ratio for your slide format.
- Use a dark colored background with light colored text. This color scheme is more visible than light backgrounds with dark text in the conference rooms.

Slide Guidelines

Slide Composition

- Use the 16:9 ratio for your slide format.
- Use a dark colored background with light colored text. This color scheme is more visible than light backgrounds with dark text in all the conference rooms.
 - Slides need to be legible when projected from 70 feet in a partially darkened room.
- Use the same typeface and color scheme throughout the presentation.
- Limit each slide to one main idea. Several simple slides are preferable to one complicated slide.
- Use duplicate slides if you need to refer to the same slide at several points during your talk.



Basic Organization

1. Title slide – Include: title of presentation (2 lines max), presenter name(s), organizational credits, date, and location of the presentation.
2. Body slides – May include text, images, and/or graphs.
3. Summary slide(s) – 1 or 2 slides that summarize the central message.
4. Conclusion slides – 1 or 2 slides can include a “thank you for your attention,” “staff acknowledgements” or a final visual.

Text Guidelines

- Choose an ADA-accessible font: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, etc.
- Title text should be 36-point font or larger
- Body text should be 24-point font or larger
- Use bullet points or the numbered outline format.
- Avoid using more than 5 lines with 5 words per line.
- Avoid using red text. It is harder to read.
- Avoid using all caps. It is harder to read.
- Use 1.5 line spacing.
- Check spelling.

Table Guidelines

- Condense the data to what is most relevant.
- Use no more than 4 columns and 3 rows.
- Use size 24-point font or larger.
- Simplify column headings wherever possible.

Image Guidelines

- Images are encouraged to help tell a story and support your text.
- Use high-quality photos with good color and contrast.
- Lighter photos are easier to see than darker ones.
- Images can highlight the work being done and the individuals doing the work (research assistants, etc.).

Graph Guidelines

- Graphs should be accessible to a wide audience.
- Limit the amount of information in each graph to what is most relevant.
- Recommended graph types
 - Flow charts
 - Summarize how several variables interact.
 - Good for methods section.
 - Schematic diagrams
 - Good for showing equipment parts.
 - Bar graphs



- Compare 2 or 3 subjects across 2 or 3 variables.
 - “Stacked” bar-graph good for expressing proportions of a whole.
- Line graphs
 - Display change over time.
 - 3 lines (data series) is the limit for one graph.
- Pie charts
 - Present proportions of the whole.
 - Two together allow comparison (like stacked bar graphs).
 - Better for more than 2 series than stacked bar graphs.
 - Present no more than 2 per slide.
- Color with graphs
 - Use bold, vibrant colors.
 - Use colors consistently across graphs.
 - Light colors on a dark background are easier to see than dark colors on a light background.
 - Color is easier to follow than symbol markers for line graphs.

Text-only Slides

- Slide with only text should be used sparingly
- Short bullet statements of central message, summary points, or key quotes can be effective.

Presenter Guidelines

Presentation Considerations

The following questions may be helpful to consider as you organize your presentation and talking points.

- What date and time am I speaking?
- How long is my presentation time?
 - Will there be a Q&A period?
- What room am I speaking in? Room assignments are included below with links to the room descriptions. Room assignments are also shown in the Online Conference Program. All rooms are ADA accessible and will include a complete AV (Audio Visual) set-up. Links to the room descriptions are included.
 - Morning Plenary Sessions and sessions in the Resilience Track will be held in the Main Theater (4th Floor), which can hold over 1000 people. Speakers will be up on the stage.
 - Sessions in the Stewardship Track will be held in the Banquet Room (3rd Floor), which can hold over 300 people. Speakers will be at the front of the room at floor level. On Day 2, there will be a second Stewardship Track session held in the Grand Ballroom (1st Floor) during the 3:15-5:00pm timeframe. Speakers will be at the front of the room up on the stage.



- Sessions in the Living Resources Track will be held in the Red Room (4th Floor, right side of the Theater), which can hold over 150 people. Speakers will be at the front of the room at floor level.
- Sessions in the Water Track will be held in the Gold Room (4th Floor, left side of the Theater), which can hold over 125 people. Speakers will be at the front of the room at floor level.
- How can I generate excitement for my subject in someone without knowledge and involvement?
 - How does this topic impact a general audience member or a member of the public?
 - How might folks working in other disciplines or other research areas within my own discipline use this information?
 - Are there anecdotes I could include for emphasis, added interest, or humor?

Prepare Your Central Message

- We recommend identifying a singular central message to help focus your presentation.
- It can be helpful to prepare a 1-2 sentence summary of the central message before creating your presentation.

Presentation Organization

- Use an opening statement that grabs the audience's attention and introduces your topic. Opening statements often:
 - Explain the relevance and importance of the topic.
 - Ask a question that the presentation will answer or seek to answer.
 - Present a problem that the work being highlighted seeks to address.
- The body of the presentation should present a series of key points.
 - The depth and scope of the content presented should be accessible to a broad audience.
- Include a summary of the key points after the body of the presentation to drive home the central message.
- Include a closing statement that emphasizes the importance of any findings/work being done and, where possible, a call to action for the audience members.
- Use simple, direct, active words.
- Use stories where possible to increase audience engagement.
- Use equations, math, and symbols sparingly.
- Summarize scientific facts and data wherever possible. Visual summaries can be particularly effective.

Presentation Tips

- Adhere to your time limit.
 - Practice your presentation ahead of time.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Modulate your voice: somewhere between monotone and singsong.



- Emphasizing individual words can help drive home key points.
- Look up and make eye contact with audience members.
- Practice to reduce filler words/sounds (uh, um, like, etc.).
- Avoid technical language wherever possible. Explain any technical language included.
- Use your slides as the punch line. Introducing the topic or making a point and then showing the slide moves your audience's attention from you to the slide, which can help maintain engagement and move through the narrative.

Delivery Style (Reading or Ad-lib)

- Speak using whatever style you are most comfortable with.
 - Some speakers prefer reading along with speaker notes.
 - Some speakers prefer to ad-lib from an outline.
 - Both styles can be successful.
- If you read from your notes:
 - Try to make it as natural as possible.
 - Don't read your slides; let your slides compliment your words.
 - Write the text in short, uncomplicated sentences.
- If you prefer note-free (ad-libbing):
 - Prepare an outline and your key talking points ahead of time.
 - Let the slides cue your speech.
 - Be careful about exceeding your time limit.

AV Equipment

- Be familiar with the AV equipment prior to your presentation.
 - All presenters are asked to arrive to their presentation room 15 minutes in advance of their session. This will provide an opportunity to become familiar with the AV equipment.
- There will be a confidence monitor and a clicker to advance your slides at the podium. The computer will be in the back of the room with the staff person or AV tech. There will be a volunteer or AV tech in each room to assist with any technical difficulties.
- Please let your session chair know in advance if you need to run a special computer simulation during your presentation or if you have other special AV requirements.

Emergency Contact

If something happens at the last minute and you are unable to make it to the conference at your scheduled time, please contact Liz Juvera (415) 778-6630 or Aurice Guyton (510-731-4425). You should also notify your session chair.