

An aerial photograph of an estuary. The left side shows deep green water, while the right side shows brown, silty water. A small red kayak is visible in the green water. The background shows a coastline with some buildings and a road.

The **ESTUARY PROTOCOL**

PROVIDED BY THE BREAKWATER NETWORK

The **ESTUARY PROTOCOL**

The Estuary Protocol is a simple but powerful conversational structure designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue within the Estuary space and beyond.

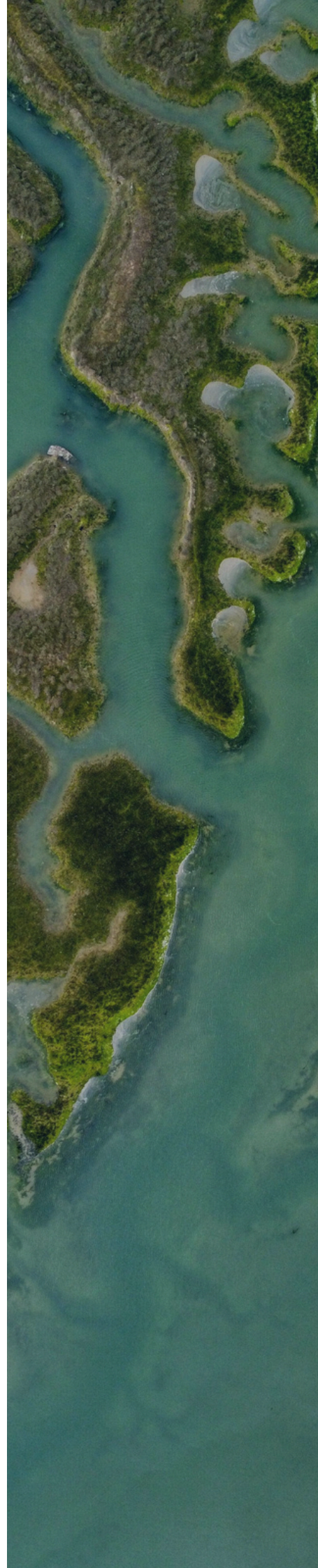
It consists of four rounds:

1 | Person

2 | Pitch

3 | Point

4 | Play



An aerial photograph of a river with a small boat in the distance. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right, with a sandy bank visible at the bottom. The water is a mix of dark green and brownish tones.

1 | PERSON

Each participant briefly introduces themselves, sharing any relevant background information they think is important for the group to know before the conversation begins.

2 | PITCH

After introductions, each person proposes one topic they would like to place on the table for discussion. Topics should fall into one of the following categories:

Intellectual

Personal

Contextual

Estuarial

Intellectual

Something you've been thinking about:

- A book, article, video, lecture, or conversation
- What struck you? Challenged you? Stayed with you?
- At the ARC conference, this may be something you have thought about from that day's speeches or events.

Contextual

Something happening around you:

- In your community, work, church, or country
- Events that affected you or those around you

Personal

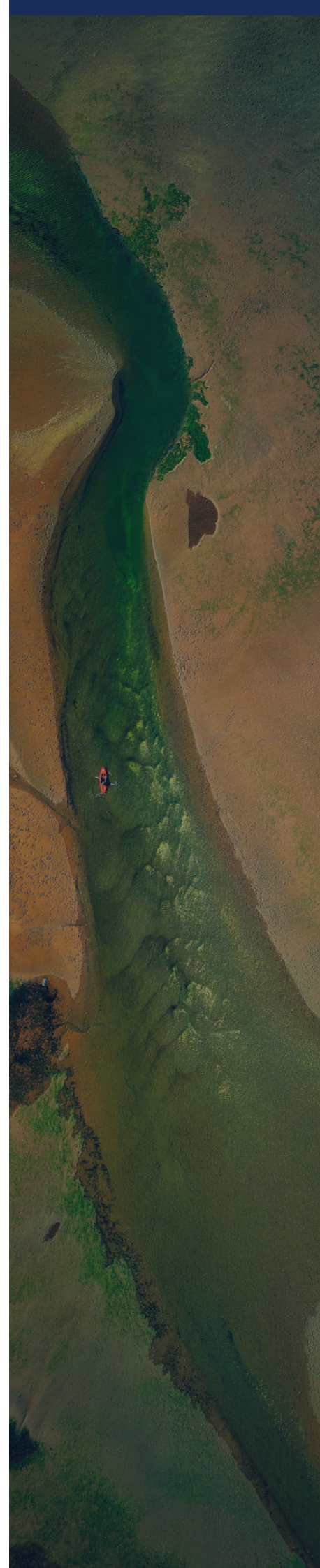
Something from your own life:

- Personal issues you are trying to work through or make sense of
- A change, challenge, loss, discovery, transition

Estuarial

Something about this kind of conversation:

- Anything relevant to the group, the protocol, or Estuary at large.
- What's meaningful, frustrating, or emerging for you here?





3 | POINT

Participants vote on one topic proposed by someone else—the topic they are most interested in exploring further.

4 | PLAY

The conversation opens into an unstructured, free-flowing discussion, using the most-voted topic as the starting point.

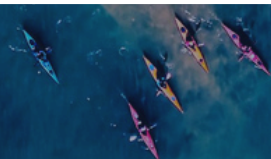
The Estuary Protocol brings together participants from diverse ideological, philosophical, cultural, and demographic backgrounds—not as opponents, but as collaborators in a shared inquiry.

Rather than consuming ideas passively, participants work them out together through speaking, listening, and reflection.

At its heart,

THE PROTOCOL EMPHASISES LISTENING AS MUCH AS SPEAKING.

Through this exchange, participants build empathy, deepen understanding, and learn to discern what holds shared significance. Over time, this practice fosters communities that are relationally engaged—both within the conversation and beyond it.



ENTERING THE CURRENT:

The Estuary Protocol is meant to be lived, not just understood. It comes fully alive through **practice**, **presence**, and **community**. If this protocol resonated with you, you're already on the path.

BREAKWATER EXISTS TO SUPPORT YOU WITH YOUR NEXT STEP.

As an international network, Breakwater helps translate the protocol into real-world gatherings by offering events, facilitation support, and connection to others practicing Estuary across different local contexts. If you feel called to host or grow an Estuary in your community, Breakwater provides connection, guidance, and relational support so you don't have to do it alone.

CONNECT WITH US:

<https://www.thebreakwaternet.com>

<https://tinyurl.com/BreakwaterDiscord>