

Changing the world, together: Wild & Scenic Film Festival tries to spark knowledge, action to protect the environment

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Jenny Nichols speaks about her film "Ay Mariposa" at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival Sunday.
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In 2007, Kathy Kasic came to the Wild & Scenic Film Festival to speak about her film ["Against the Current."](#)

She returned in 2010 to showcase another film of hers, "The Fishman." The California State University teacher came back again to the 18th annual 2020 festival on Sunday.

This time, however, she was an audience member.

Film festivals like Wild & Scenic are important, she said, because they allow environmental filmmakers to engage others, exchange ideas and garner momentum to continue their work.

"It's like a roller coaster," said Kasic, referring to the changing political winds on climate and environmental protection. "There's always a possibility for positive change."

This year's festival, which began Thursday and will end today, highlights a myriad of stories about environmental degradation and actions taken to prevent such harm.

"Wild & Scenic shares an urgent call to action, encouraging festival-goers to learn more about what they can do to save our threatened planet," [reads the festival's website](#).

At the festival on Sunday, Kasic said she hopes that climate activists, scientists and environmentalists take heed of what people say who don't believe climate change has been manipulated by humans.

"People are feeling like they haven't been heard," she said, noting that ranchers want to be good stewards of the land, they just don't want to be called "environmentalists" because of the social and political backlashes they may face.

"We have to be very careful about trigger words," she said.

The festival, hosted by the South Yuba River Citizens League, [is the largest annual fundraiser for the nonprofit](#). It attracts filmmakers and audience members from around the state and the country.

Derek Knowles was around the festival Sunday, discussing his film "[After the Fire](#)," which is about how Sonoma Valley has been shaped by recent wildfire.

The director and cinematographer said he hoped to inspire a deeper awareness of the destructive forces that stem from wildfire. He also wants viewers to become more involved in environmental protectionism at the local level, which "needs to be both holistic and comprehensive," he said.

Shane Anderson was in attendance on Sunday at the festival as well. He was discussing his film "Sanctuary," which aired Saturday.

His film, and his work with the [nonprofit Pacific Rivers](#) is trying to protect watershed ecosystems in western America.

Anderson's organization is currently developing an atlas to highlight public lands that should receive more federal protections from the timber industry, he said.

Whatever environmental protections are added, said teacher and filmmaker Kathy Kasic, efforts toward that end will be formed in the collective, not the singular.

"No one individual in the film industry is going to change the world alone," she said.

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