

Tom Durkin
Special to Prospector

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Wild & Scenic Film Festival brings environmental activism home



A scene from last year's Wild & Scenic Film Festival. This year's festival is Jan. 14 to 18.



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Know & Go

Who: South Yuba River Citizens League presents

What: 14th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival

Where: Multiple venues in Nevada City and Grass Valley

When: Thursday, Jan. 14 through Monday, Jan. 18

Admission: Festival passes range from \$65 (youth 17 & under); \$110 SYRCL members; \$150 adult; \$375 Friend of the Yuba pass. Passes not good at all events. Consult W&S program for individual session prices and special events.

Tickets: Will call pickup and ticket purchases will be available at the National Hotel in Nevada City; Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets may also be picked up or purchased at the Center for the Arts in Grass Valley.

More information: SYRCL offices will be closed during the festival. Come to Festival HQ at the National Hotel in Nevada City or the Center for the Arts Hub in Grass Valley or visit <https://www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org>. There are wi-fi hotspots at many of the venues to keep festivalgoers up to date.

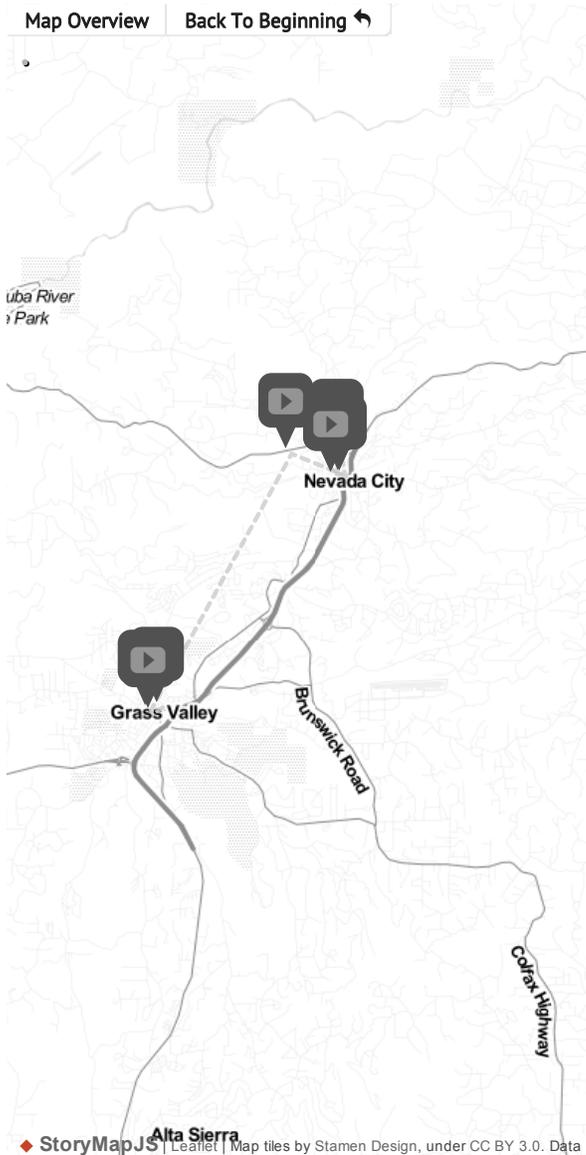
If you can't find something to see or do this weekend at the South Yuba River Citizens League's 14th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, you might want to check your pulse.

Backed by 700 volunteers, the festival will present more than 140 mostly short films in nine venues in two cities over four days, reported Melinda Booth, the festival director.

What's more, "We have 10 activist workshops, two coffee talks, two fireside chats and a youth workshop," she said.

And then there are also the book signings, the pedal-powered stage, eco tours, art shows, music, parties "and the list goes on."

"The Wild & Scenic Film Festival combines stellar filmmaking, beautiful cinematography and first-rate storytelling," according to the festival's mission statement. "The goal is to inform, inspire and ignite solutions and possibilities to restore the earth and human communities while creating a positive future for the next generation."



WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL: FRIDAY SCHEDULE



Start Exploring

You saw it here first

This year's festival features 19 world premieres, including the much-anticipated "Dear Governor Brown."

This documentary challenges Gov. Jerry Brown's paradoxical stance on fracking in the face of evidence of water pollution.

Writer-Director Jon Bowermaster, a W&S veteran, will be available after each of the three screenings to discuss the 25-minute film.

"We don't know yet if the governor has watched the film," he wrote in a Jan. 7 email.

Other world premiere films scheduled this weekend include "The World Beneath the Rims" (inside the Grand Canyon), "Falling for the Mountain" (saving a mountain from urbanization) and "Filtering a Plastic Ocean" (fighting microplastic pollution).

A film, however, doesn't have to be a world premiere to be worth watching. Chuck Jaffee, this year's head juror, has been previewing some of the festival films for The Union for the past few weeks.

You can see his comments and interviews with some of the filmmakers at <http://startlets.com/filmfestivals.html> or go to www.theunion.com and search for "Chuck Jaffee."

He had special praise for "The Burden," "A Quest for Meaning" and "Paddle for the North."

Your program, your best friend

Navigating the WSFF can be daunting.

Experienced festivalgoers know to carry the 70-page festival guide with them wherever they go.

It not only tells attendees where the films and events they want to see are, but how to find the free bus to get them to the venue.

The program explains the complex pricing of festival passes, individual session costs, what's free, and what costs extra. Of course, it describes each of the films, workshops, discussions and all the other activities open to festivalgoers, including information and entertainment open to the public.

The detailed program advises "How to Fest," an invaluable guide on everything from how to be an environmentally responsible festivalier. to how make sure you get to see the films you want to see (get there early).

The Grass Valley connection

It's only been in the last three years that Grass Valley was included in the ever-growing festival.

As it has every year, the Del Oro Theatre will host a 3D Family Film Session Thursday evening featuring, "Wild Africa," "The Great Apes" and "Jean-Michel Cousteau's Secret Ocean."

More kids' films are scheduled in the mornings on Saturday (Center for the Arts) and Sunday (Del Oro).

(Tickets are not included in festival passes).

Besides hosting such world premiere films as "36 Inches" and "The Way We Eat" at the Center for the Arts, Grass Valley merchants will be holding Wild & Happy Hours, free art receptions and other opportunities geared toward festival attendees.

The reward of awards

It's an honor to be chosen to be screened at the Wild & Scenic Festival. About 350 submitted films did not make the cut.

Of the 135 films qualified for the competition (some films are for show only), just a few will walk away with top honors, including Best of Festival, Spirit of Activism, Most Inspiring Adventure Film, Best in Theme, Best Short, Student Filmmaker Award, John DeGraaf Award for Environmental Filmmaking, Best Children's Film and the People's Choice Award.

There will be additional jury awards and honorable mentions given to films worthy of recognition.

Most of the awards will be announced at the Sunday awards ceremony at the Nevada Theatre in Nevada City. Some of the award-winning films will also be screened.

Although most out-of-towners will have left, the remaining award-winning films will be screened Monday night at the Nevada Theatre in a "Locals Appreciation Screening," Booth stated.

“The Wild & Scenic is not only a chance to see the best environmental films,” she said. “It’s also a great opportunity meet — and learn - from the filmmakers themselves,” she concluded.

Tom Durkin is a freelance writer and photographer in Nevada City. He can be contacted at tdurkin@vfr.net or www.tomdurkin-writer.net.

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