



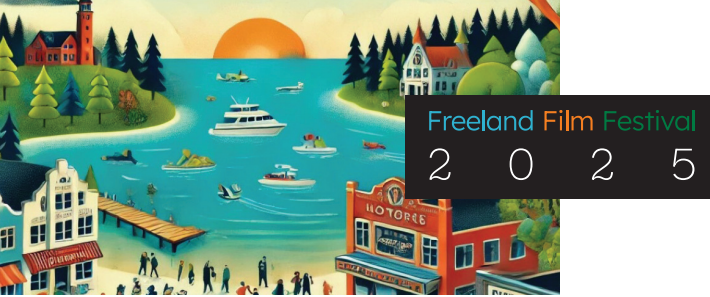
Freeland Film Festival

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CELEBRATING OUR PLANET

September 12 -14, 2025 | Green Lake, Wisconsin

FREELAND



Welcome back to the Freeland Film Festival.

This year's Freeland Film Festival is celebrating our big, beautiful and one-and-only Earth by featuring stories, storytellers and real-life heroes that inspire hope for planet and people.

Our family-friendly weekend consists of movies, parties, panels and live music!

This year we focus on "Planetary Health". What's that, some might ask? It's an approach that protects the health of people, animals and ecosystems, all at the same time, recognizing that they're all connected. Planetary Health basically means what's good for the planet is good for you too. Come see what we mean through our movies and panels on wildlife, habitat protection, and regenerative agriculture. There are movies and activities for every age and background.

We thank all of those who supported this year's fest, especially Fortifi Bank, Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, Jeff Shadick and Mike Ertmer, Sarah and Johan Loberg, Rich Christian and Deb Walker, Tim and Kate Flannery, Todd and Kara Weir, Barry and Ann Rogers, Alfred Peck Foundation, Steve Peters, Gretchen Winter and Jim Brown. (See program insert for the complete list of donors).

Freeland, a Green Lake-based, global non-profit, spends its time all year round helping to make our planet and people safe from trafficking, while building resilient communities and ecosystems --all over the world. Together with our partner alliance, EarthTeam, we stay busy promoting and implementing the Planetary Health approach at the frontlines. It's nice for all of us to take a break and, together, watch good movies that remind us of what we have, and of our common purpose. We all share this home that we call Earth, so let's celebrate and protect it. We think there's no better place to do that than Green Lake, Wisconsin. Come and enjoy your weekend with us. Let's kick back, network, learn, and have some fun!

– **Steve Galster and Rich Christian**, Executive Producers
Molly Ferrill, Producer, and **Evelyn Galster**, Fest Coordinator

CELEBRATING



Special Guests

Film directors and main characters from documentaries, including Ben Albert and his grandfather Cal DeWitt from our opening night film.

Moon-shot Thinkers and Shakers from: Generation Blue, X-Prize, and more.

Regenerative Farming Leaders from FoxRap (Shelly Rothman) and Boerson Farms (Mat Boerson).

Global environmental investigators: Former Special Agent Ed Newcomer, Freeland Founder Steve Galster, and more.

Musical artists from near and far (check out the musician bios in the program, and thanks to Marcella Jones for coordinating our music acts!)

Venues

Our festival activities will take place across these beautiful Green Lake venues:

Thrasher Opera House

Town Square Community Center

Caestecker Library

Deacon Mills Park (Starlight Theater)



freeland.org/film-festival

Friday, September 12th

7pm-8:45pm

An Invitation to Wonder: Waubesa Wetlands (1h) followed by Q&A with film's director and main character {THRASHER}

9PM Onward

Mill Pond Terrace Opening Night Party {TOWN SQUARE}

Saturday, September 13th

10:30-11:00am

Monkey Laundering (Bloomberg TV) (27 mins). Main character of film is present. {THRASHER}

Shorts Program: Wildlife #1 {NOT KID FRIENDLY} {LIBRARY}

11-11:45am

The Great Rhino Robbery (BBC), episode 1. Main character is present. {THRASHER}

Shorts Program: Wildlife #2 {KID FRIENDLY} {LIBRARY}

11:45am-12:30pm

Panel. "Ending Trafficking: Freeland's Mission"

(Newcomer, Galster, Majumdar & Ferrill) {TOWN SQUARE}

Live Music: Brian Drow (outside, on lawn corner) {TOWN SQUARE}

Shorts Program: Sustainable Agriculture {KID FRIENDLY} {LIBRARY}

1-2:30pm

The Great Rhino Robbery (BBC), episodes 2 & 3 {THRASHER}

My Garden of a Thousand Bees {TOWN SQUARE}

Shorts Program Below {LIBRARY}

1-2pm Planet Killers: The Tiger Cartels {NOT KID FRIENDLY}

2-2:30pm Shorts: Indigenous Stewards of Nature {KID FRIENDLY}

2:30-3:00pm

Live Music: John Keach {THRASHER}

Finding Manoomin {KID FRIENDLY} {LIBRARY}

Films by Rangers: Ravenswood Media short film Birding in Rwanda followed by presentation by David McGowan {TOWN SQUARE}

3:00-4:40pm

Common Ground {THRASHER}

All That Breathes* {TOWN SQUARE}

Live Music: Injiano Saji and Zipporah Keach {STARLIGHT}

4:45-5:30pm

Panel: Regenerative Farming (Boerson, Rothman, Strauser, Walker) {TOWN SQUARE}

Live Music: Brian Drow and Injiano Saji {STARLIGHT}



Festival Program

Saturday, September 13th

5:30-6:30pm (Dinner)

Live Music: John and Zipporah Keach {STARLIGHT}

6:30-7pm

Live Music {THRASHER}

7-9pm

Green and Gold (1hr45m) {THRASHER}

Private Party {TOWN SQUARE}

7:30pm

Blue Whales, Return of the Giants* {STARLIGHT}

9:00pm

Awards Party (Jury Ballroom): All fest ticket holders welcome {TOWN SQUARE}

Sunday, September 14th

10:30am-12:15pm

Backyard Wilderness* (1h45m) {THRASHER}

10:30-11:45am

Turtle Walker* {TOWN SQUARE}

11:45-1:15pm

Blue Carbon {TOWN SQUARE}

Live Music {STARLIGHT}

1:15-3:00pm

Pangolin: Kulu's Journey*, (1h30m) followed by Q/A with Producers (FREE entry) {THRASHER}

Panel: Technology for Good (Generation Blue, X-Prize, Freeland) {TOWN SQUARE}

Live Music {STARLIGHT}

3-4:15pm

Mass Extinction, Life at the Brink* {THRASHER}

Wilding* {TOWN SQUARE}

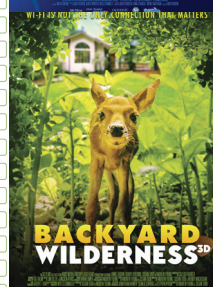
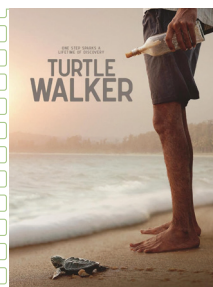
4-4:30pm

Live Music {THRASHER}

4:30-6pm

Closing Film: Bad River {THRASHER}

*We are featuring bonus appearances of Tangled Bank Studios films and Kulu, the Pangolin's Journey. Free entry to these films.



OUR PLAN

Friday, September 12th

LOCATION→ TIME↓	THRASHER	TOWN SQUARE	LIBRARY	STARLIGHT
7 - 8:45pm	Opening Night Film An Invitation to Wonder: Waubesa Wetlands: (1h) followed by Q&A with film's director and main character			
9pm onward		Mill Pond Terrace Opening Night Party		

Saturday, September 13th

LOCATION→ TIME↓	THRASHER	TOWN SQUARE	LIBRARY	STARLIGHT
10:30 - 11:00am	The Dirty Business of Monkey Laundering (27m) Main character of film is present.		Shorts Program: Wildlife #1 (not kid friendly)	
11:00 - 11:45am	The Great Rhino Robbery , episode 1. Main character is present.		Shorts Program: Wildlife #2 (kid friendly)	
11:45 - 12:30pm (snacks available)		Panel. "Ending Trafficking: Freeland's Mission" (Newcomer, Galster, Majumdar & Ferrill) Live Music: Brian Drow (outside, on lawn corner)	Shorts Program: Sustainable Agriculture (kid friendly)	
1 - 2:30pm	The Great Rhino Robbery , episodes 2&3.	My Garden of a Thousand Bees	Planet Killers: The Tiger Cartels (not kid friendly/1-2pm) Shorts: Indigenous Stewards of Nature (kid friendly/2-2:30pm)	
2:30 - 3:00pm	Live Music: John Keach	Films by Rangers: Ravenswood Media short film Birding in Rwanda followed by presentation by David McGowan	Finding Manoomin (kid friendly)	



Festival Program

Saturday, September 13th

LOCATION → TIME ↓	THRASHER	TOWN SQUARE	LIBRARY	STARLIGHT
3:00 - 4:40pm	Common Ground (1h41m)	All That Breathes		Live Music: Injiano Saji
4:45 - 5:30pm		Panel: Regenerative Farming (Boerson, Rothman, Strauser, Walker)		Live Music: Brian Drow and Injiano Saji
5:30 - 6:30pm Dinner				Live Music: John and Zipporah Keach
7:00 - 9:00pm	Green and Gold (1hr45m)	Private Party		
7:30 - 8:15pm				Blue Whales, Return of the Giants Bonus Short Film: Badwoods
9:00pm		Awards Party (Jury Ballroom): All ticket holders welcome		

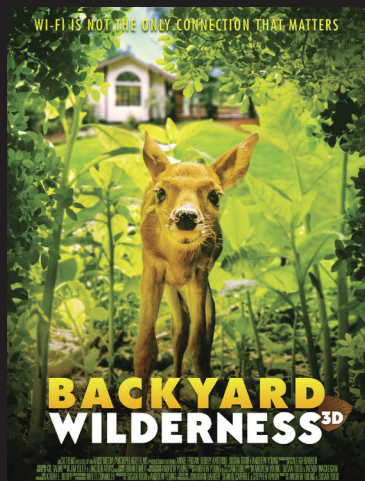
Sunday, September 14th

LOCATION → TIME ↓	THRASHER	TOWN SQUARE	LIBRARY	STARLIGHT
10:30am - 11:45pm		Turtle Walker		
10:30am - 12:15pm	Backyard Wilderness (1h45m)			
11:45 - 1:15pm		Blue Carbon		Live Music
1:15 - 3:00pm	Pangolin: Kulu's Journey , (1h30m) followed by Q/A with Producers (FREE entry)	Panel: Technology for Good (Generation Blue, X-Prize, Freeland)		Live Music
3:00 - 4:15pm	Mass Extinction, Life at the Brink Bonus Short Film: I am Water	Wilding		
4:00 - 4:30pm	Live Music			
4:30 - 6:00pm	Closing Film: Bad River			

OUR PLANET

Backyard Wilderness

1hr 45m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Directors: Susan Todd, Andrew Young



Presented by award-winning SK Films, HHMI Tangled Bank Studios, Arise Media and Archipelago Films, BACKYARD WILDERNESS takes viewers on a surprising and spectacular journey to discover the unexpected natural wonders that lie right outside our doors. The film follows young Katie and her family, living in a house at the edge of the woods. Absorbed by digital screens, electronics, and their busy modern lives, they're blind to the real-life spectacle unfolding all around them. Until, that is, a school project sends Katie outdoors, and sparks her gradual discovery of a whole new world that had previously gone unnoticed. We experience her joy and wonder as her backyard comes alive—wood duck chicks diving out of trees, a mouse dodging deer, salamanders dodging traffic, and coyote pups learning how to hunt.

Turtle Walker

1hr 15m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: Taira Malaney



In the late 1970s, Satish Bhaskar embarked on an epic journey along India's spectacular coastlines, living alongside rare sea turtles to unravel the mysteries that surround them - and set out to save the enigmatic sea creatures from extinction.

Wilding

1hr 15m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: David Allen



Based on Isabella Tree's best-selling book by the same title, **WILDING** tells the story of a young couple that bets on nature for the future of their failing, four-hundred-year-old estate. The young couple battles entrenched tradition, and dares to place the fate of their farm in the hands of nature. Ripping down the fences, they set the land back to the wild and entrust its recovery to a motley mix of animals both tame and wild. It is the beginning of a grand experiment that will become one of the most significant rewilding experiments in Europe.

All That Breathes

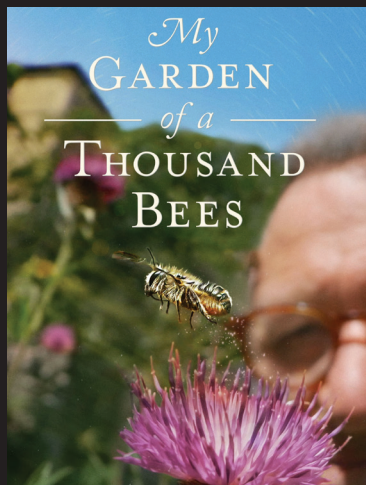
1hr 37m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: Shaunak Sen



In one of the world's most polluted cities, two brothers devote their lives to a bird - the black kite. From the tiny basement of their family business, they rescue tens of thousands of these mesmeric creatures that drop daily from the thick grey skies, and dream of someday building a proper wildlife hospital. As environmental toxicity and civil unrest escalate in New Delhi, the bond between this Muslim family and the neglected kite forms a poignant chronicle of the city's collapsing ecology and rising social tension.

My Garden of a Thousand Bees

53m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: David Allen

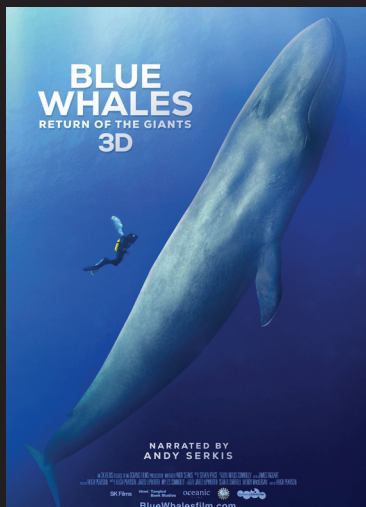


Taking refuge from the pandemic a wildlife filmmaker sets out to record the incredible variety of wild bees in his small garden, finally developing a close relationship with an individual bee that he has followed over its entire life.

Martin Dohrn is an expert at exploring the macroscopic world; his last project on ants with David Attenborough won awards around the world. This time, he unravels a bee filled universe inhabited by winged creatures of every size and shape. From giant bumblebees to scissor bees the size of a mosquito, he has seen over 60 species of bee in his backyard. As he gets sucked into this world, he narrates with the charm and informative voice of a man obsessed. Filmed with one-of-a-kind lenses forged on his kitchen table, this film illuminates its audience with unique natural history insights, and depths of behaviors never recorded before.

Blue Whales: Return of the Giants

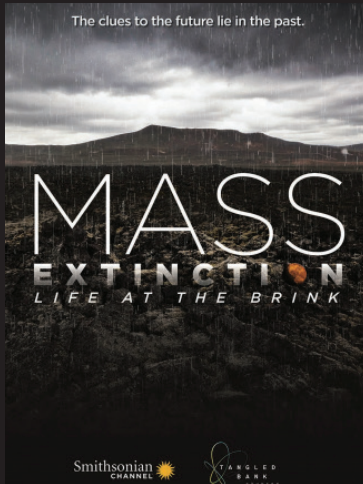
45m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: Hugh Pearson



Come on a journey of a lifetime to explore the world of the magnificent blue whale, a species rebounding from its near extinction. Following two scientific expeditions—one to find a missing population of blues off the exotic Seychelles Islands, the other to chronicle whale families in Mexico's stunning Gulf of California—the film transforms our understanding of the largest animal ever to have lived. From its almost incomprehensible size to its spectacular feeding habits; from the surprising role it plays in the health of our oceans to its awesome long-distance communications, the film provides an unforgettable window into the lives these animals live—and the extremes scientists must endure to study them. Joined by a cast of supporting characters—from dolphins and sperm whales to sea lions and orcas—the blue whale finally gets its star turn ... in life size, on the giant screen!

Mass Extinction: Life at the Brink

46m | Tangled Bank Studios Productions | Director: Sarah Holt



It's a mystery on a global scale: five times in Earth's past, life has been nearly extinguished, the vast majority of plant and animal species annihilated in a geologic instant. What triggered these dramatic events? And what might they tell us about the fate of our world?

MASS EXTINCTION: LIFE AT THE BRINK joins scientists around the globe in search of answers to two of the most dramatic mass extinctions: the "K/T Extinction," which wiped out the dinosaurs, and "The Great Dying," which 250 million years ago annihilated nearly 90% of all Earth's species. The film travels from the mountains of Italy to the coasts of Spain, from the wilds of China to rugged Siberian taiga. Along the way, investigators gather clues from ancient bones, clay, crystals and rock as they attempt to create long-lost worlds. And the story they piece together is astounding.

Green and Gold

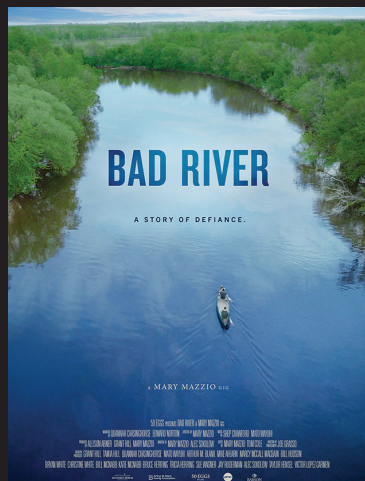
1hr 45m | Director: Anders Lindwall



Foreclosure looms over Wisconsin dairy farmer Buck (Craig T. Nelson). With mounting debt and the land his family has cultivated for four generations at risk, Buck refuses to give up his legacy without a fight. Buck's granddaughter (Madison Lawlor) works alongside him but dreams of a career in music. Her aspirations are fanned by an emerging friendship with a famous musician (Brandon Sklenar), but chasing her dreams might take her far from the farm. With time running out, Buck places a daring bet on his beloved Green Bay Packers winning the Championship, risking it all to save everything he holds dear.

Bad River

1hr 27m | Director: Mary Mazzio



BAD RIVER, narrated by Quannah Chasing-Horse and Academy-Award nominee, Edward Norton; written and directed by award-winning filmmaker, Mary Mazzio; and produced by Grant Hill (Owner of the Atlanta Hawks) and Allison Abner (writer for Narcos, West Wing and descendant of the Stockbridge Munsee Band), is a new documentary film which chronicles the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band and its ongoing fight for sovereignty, a story which unfolds in a groundbreaking way through a series of shocking revelations, devastating losses, and a powerful legacy of defiance and resilience, which includes a David vs. Goliath battle to save Lake Superior, the largest freshwater resource in America. As Eldred Corbine, a Bad River Tribal Elder declares: "We gotta protect it... die for it, if we have to."

Pangolin: Kulu's Journey

1hr 30m | Director: Pippa Ehrlich



A man discovers purpose helping rescue a trafficked baby pangolin in South Africa. He dedicates himself to rehabilitating the endangered animal for release into the wild. Film by the director of MY OCTOPUS TEACHER.

Common Ground

1hr 30m | Directors: Joshua and Rebecca Tickell



COMMON GROUND is the highly anticipated sequel to the juggernaut success documentary, KISS THE GROUND, which touched over 1 billion people globally and inspired the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to put \$20 billion toward soil health. By fusing journalistic expose' with deeply personal stories from those on the front lines of the food movement, this film unveils a dark web of money, power, and politics behind our broken food system. The film reveals how unjust practices forged our current farm system in which farmers of all colors are literally dying to feed us. The film profiles a hopeful and uplifting movement of white, black, and indigenous farmers who are using alternative "regenerative" models of agriculture that could balance the climate, save our health, and stabilize America's economy - before it's too late.

Blue Carbon

1hr 25m | Director: Nicholas Brown



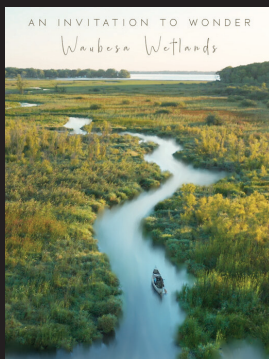
Told through the eyes of Grammy-nominated DJ and marine biologist, Jayda Guy, accompanied by a score from the Wu-Tang Clan's RZA and featuring Seu Jorge, **BLUE CARBON** is an environmental feature documentary that brings together music and science to uncover what could be our greatest weapon in the fight against climate change.

Filmed in the USA, Senegal, Vietnam, France, Colombia and Brazil, the documentary explores the latest science around the relatively newly-discovered potential of oceans to absorb much more carbon from the atmosphere than even tropical rainforests. This “Blue Carbon” as scientists are now calling it, can be found in salt-marshes, sea-grasses and mangroves, but once again it is a race against time to protect and restore these vital ecosystems and to harness their untold power in the battle against global warming.

OPENING NIGHT FILM

An Invitation to Wonder: Waubesa Wetlands

58m | Director: Ben Albert



Guided by the wisdom of his grandfather, a young filmmaker journeys through the mysterious wetland in his grandparent's backyard. Navigating the challenges of this environment, the film uncovers the life, secrets, and wonder of wetlands in a way that must be seen to be believed.

The Great Rhino Robbery (Episodes 1, 2 & 3)

45m | BBC | Director: Jesse Vile



In 2011, regional museums and auction houses across Britain are hit by a bizarre crime spree. Despite holding millions of pounds worth of precious artefacts, only one item has been targeted during each robbery: rhino horn. As this strange crime wave sweeps through Europe and beyond, rhino numbers are shrinking as their horns become more valuable than gold in the dark, illegal, world of animal poaching and trafficking. This documentary unpicks the story behind why the Rhino is facing extinction and the race to catch the people responsible - before it's too late.

The Dirty Business of Monkey Laundering

26m | Bloomberg



Fake permits, undercover informants and millions of dollars. How a US government agency set out to prove suppliers to research labs were importing wild monkeys from Cambodia with false paperwork.



Planet Killers: The Tiger Cartels

50m | France | Paul Moreira and Stéphane Malterre

Fewer than 5,000 tigers remain in the wild worldwide. A symbol of power and admiration, this magnificent feline has tragically become a commodity by a criminal network. Raised like cows in clandestine tiger farms, killed and transformed into glue, believed to bring health and cure rheumatism, tiger products are highly sought after in Asia and sold illegally in the streets of Hanoi and Beijing, as well as online. In this film, the directors investigate the powerful Tiger Cartel, which extends from Thailand to Vietnam, Laos and China.

This episode of the french television (Premieres Lignes) series Planet Killers features Freeland's work!

Finding Manoomin: A Search for the Spirit of Wild Rice

26m | Director: Leah Lemm



FINDING MANOOMIN: A SEARCH FOR THE SPIRIT OF WILD RICE follows MPR News senior editor Leah Lemm, a citizen of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, as she rediscovers her cultural roots.

The documentary explores culture, tradition and identity while diving into the sacred connection between the Ojibwe people and Manoomin (wild rice).

In our **Shorts Program**, we have bundled a variety of carefully selected shorter films from around the world that cover the themes of our festival, including:

Wildlife #1

Wildlife #2

Sustainable Agriculture

Indigenous Stewards of Nature

Almost all of these shorter films are kid friendly, and marked as such in the program.

The Library venue is the perfect setting for the short film programs. Several of the short film programs are kid friendly, and there will be games and toys for kids to play with upstairs.



Special Thanks to Our Festival Staff:

Sam LaStrapes - Technical Director

Travis Bird - Projectionist and Theatrical Installation, Thrasher Opera House

Britany Gunderson - Venue Manager, Thrasher Opera House

Chris Bredenberg - Projectionist, Town Square

Jordy Brazo - Venue Manager, Town Square

Ryan Putskey - Projectionist, Caestecker Library

...and a big thanks to all of our amazing festival volunteers!

Sustainable Agriculture Shorts Program (kid friendly)



Beekind 10m 41s | US | Olivia Bronwyn

Follow Gregg Scott and the keepers of Circling Hawk Honey & Mead, as we're taken under their wing to get an up-close look at the species so relied upon by our kind. Beekind gives insight on the nature of the honeybee as a member of the colony, their interactions and relationships to each other and to humans, as we look within, and take one big sustainable step back. We're welcomed into Circling Hawk, the business and home of Gregg and Michelle Scott, our owners and operators, and caretakers of the 25 acres of land. Alongside their two protégés Julia and John, they take us on their journey as stewards, artists, and guides to the life they lead at the apiary. A life of peace, love, and earthly balance.



Dune Forest 13m14s | Belgium | Liener Van Hauwaert

Driven by a determination to combat desertification—a crisis predicted to claim 90% of the planet's land by 2050— landscape architect Louis De Jaeger embarks on a 7-year mission to transform a dune into a food forest. The documentary captures the grit and ingenuity required to regenerate soil and create sustainable ecosystems. Through innovative techniques like nutrient recycling, composting, and using “weeds” as free fertilizers, Louis turns infertile sand into rich, organic soil, supporting a productive food forest.



Project 101: A Hundred Farmers & One 12m 8s | India | Yash Dhruv Sawhney, Rajeev Amit Singh

Project 101: A Hundred Farmers & One is the story of a young researcher who set out to introduce sustainable farming techniques to small-scale sugarcane farmers in Uttar Pradesh. But as he learned from the farmers just as much as they learned from him, the project evolved into a collective movement of knowledge-sharing, trust, and empowerment.

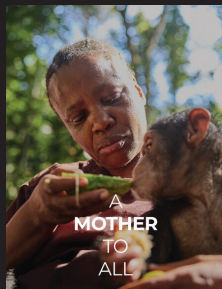
Using trench method planting, furrow irrigation, and balanced fertilizer application, the project introduced farmers to precision agriculture techniques that increased sugarcane yields by up to 60% while reducing cultivation costs. Through soil nutrient testing and bio-compost fertilization, farmers restored soil health while cutting down on chemical use. The project also employed drone technology for micronutrient application and Trichoderma-based soil treatments to enhance pest resistance. By merging scientific innovation with traditional farming wisdom, Ek Sau Ek is a testament to how real change happens—not from the outside in, but from within a community that uplifts itself together.



Jus d'orange 13m 45s | France, Poland | Alexandre Athané

Toni grows oranges. He loves them, they are his treasure. Until one day, strange cargo ships dock in the valley. Cargos loaded with... GREEN oranges!

Wildlife Shorts Program 1 (not kid friendly)



A Mother to All 4m 35s | Liberia, Argentina | Francisco María Galeazzi

In Liberia, countless chimpanzees are orphaned and displaced due to the illegal pet trade and human encroachment. This short documentary offers a moving glimpse into their reality through the eyes of a caregiver who becomes a mother figure to the young chimps, reflecting on the deep emotional bonds that connect us — and the urgent need to protect them.



Bear Guardians 16m 20s | Cambodia, US | Mariah Wilson

BEAR GUARDIANS is a portrait of a father and daughter wildlife rescue team that care for sun and moon bears in Cambodia. We follow their work with two amputee bears who have lost limbs from being caught in snare traps.



Caliandra—A Tale of Resistance 12m | Brazil | Cesar Leite, Bruna Lucheze

In the heart of the Cerrado, Caliandra, a maned wolf, lives with her mate in a monogamous bond. When he disappears, she embarks on a journey to find him, revealing the challenges her species faces due to human encroachment. During her search, she falls into a trap and is captured by scientists who study and protect maned wolves. There, she learns that her mate was killed in a road accident—but she is pregnant. After being released, Caliandra returns to the wild, carrying the hope of a new cycle of life.

For the first time, the drama of a single animal's life will be told in depth, blending fiction and reality to create a powerful and emotional story. The film highlights the resilience of Cerrado's wildlife and the impact of roads on nature, offering an intimate and unforgettable look at Caliandra's journey.

Wildlife Shorts Program 2 (kid friendly)



Echoes in the Dark 16m 3s | US | Victor San Martin-Diaz

Unique, mysterious, but misunderstood; a species that does so much for us, and their real value is now coming out of the dark. Echoes in the Dark (2024) uncovers the impact of an unsuspecting, yet wildly rejected creature: bats. The documentary is a fully student-produced project from the University of Florida, led by a team in their early 20s.

The film shines a light on the immense value these flying mammals hold not just to the people in the small town of Gainesville, Florida, where the film takes place, but across the world. The human relationship with bats is fully realized throughout the piece and shows how this connection has evolved and shifted over decades. It highlights the relationships experts and admirers alike hold with the species while also challenging what it means to coexist with the natural world, accepting all the wildlife that plays a role in it, by settling the misconceptions commonly tacked onto the animal. Furthermore, the film explores how climate change is hurting bat populations across the sea and back at home, which is lessening their relevance and benefits for both people and the environment.



Calling the Wild 11m 59s | US | Brynn Smarrella, Madelin Crawford

A wolf trainer pushes the boundaries of animal medical care by listening and building trust.



Wonders of Evolution 14m 57s | Colombia | Francisco Arango Ceballos

Through a scientific perspective, the film explores the complex evolutionary adaptations of these insects, highlighting their bizarre designs and their enigmatic way of communicating. Furthermore, it reveals the challenges they face, offering insight into the role they play in ecological balance and the importance of conserving their habitat.

Indigenous Stewards of Nature Shorts Program



Azhe-mino-biinikamigitoon: Return our Earth to its pristine condition 4m 32s | US (Minnesota) | Leah Prussia, Nicole Alston

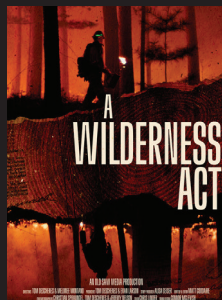
This animated film follows an Anishinaabe elder sharing teachings with their grandchild about the impacts of our changing planet/climate on all of our relations. The elder envisions a deteriorating future and a future of transformation with his grandchild. The film highlights the importance of intergenerational knowledge, personal and planetary connection, and community collaboration. The film invites the audience to reflect on their legacy as ancestors.



Keepers of the Coastline 12m 30s | US |

Jeremy Charles

In 2023, the Tolowa Dee-ni' people alongside partnering tribes asserted sovereignty over the 700 square miles of their ancestral fisheries. Now in 2024, we see how marine science and resource management can be guided by community and culture.



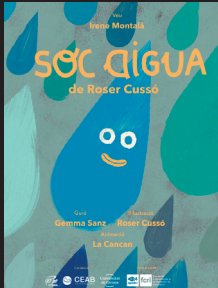
A Wilderness Act 12m 33s | US (WI) |

Nisogaabokwe Melonee Montano, Tom Deschenes

What does "wilderness" mean to you? Guided by the wisdom of college professor Evan Larson and Anishinabe student Melonee Montano, we learn how the very definitions penned to protect our country's most precious landscapes can destroy them instead. United by their desire to preserve the Red Pine forests of Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area, the two join together to educate upcoming generations on how returning fire to the land, and returning the land to its people, can be healing for all.

Shorts

Bonus Shorts



I am Water 6m 20s | Spain | Roser Cusó

A drop of water precipitates from a cloud and falls on a little girl who suffers the consequences of the drought. Together they embark on a journey to reach the sea, during which the drop sees the problems of the lack of water that endanger the life of the girl and the rest of the community.



Badwoods 14m 30s | Czech Republic | Jiří Hanzlíček

Animated short about environmental pollution with an eco-educational overtone. A kind soul wanders into the forest and creates the film's main character - Trashy - from discarded garbage. Trashy gets to know nature and discovers how indifferent people are to it. His path, full of suffering, leads through the forest to a recycling yard in Sorttown. Can Trashy change the world? Or is it up to us?



Birding in Rwanda 5m | Rwanda | Roger Irakoz

Rwandan birder, Joseph Lionceau, highlights the incredible diversity of birds in his country and why they are important to the environment.



Cal DeWitt is a field ecologist and wetland scientist for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is a professor emeritus of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. He is main character in the opening night film AN INVITATION TO WONDER: WAUBESA WETLANDS.

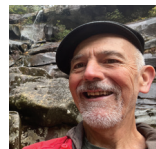
Ben Albert, who spent his childhood exploring the Waubesa Wetlands with his grandfather, is a Milwaukee-based filmmaker and storyteller focused on “human relationships with the natural world”. He is the director of the opening night film AN INVITATION TO WONDER: WAUBESA WETLANDS.



Ed Newcomer is a decorated law enforcement professional and lawyer who served as a special agent with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for over 20 years. Many of the investigations he conducted have been featured in televised documentaries about international wildlife trafficking. Since February 2025, Ed has hosted the popular podcast Nature’s Secret

Service (www.naturessecretservice.com).

David McGowan is an Academy Award nominated filmmaker. The majority of his career has been dedicated to conservation and environmental issues. McGowan has partnered with government agencies and not-for-profit organizations to alert the public and policy makers about major environmental concerns. He is now focused on training the next generation of conservationists in the craft of filmmaking. In his “Films by Rangers” presentation at the festival, McGowan will provide a review of the history, current projects, and future of a free wildlife filmmaking course for rangers, trackers, and guides that he has taught in Rwanda and Uganda. The idea is to provide both training and equipment for free to rangers, trackers, and guides in the hope that they will add their voices to the global discussion of wildlife conservation.



Shawn Karsten As Vice President of Community, Shawn co-leads the individual giving team primarily focused on high-net-worth individuals and foundations to both cultivate and grow XPRIZE’s existing benefactor community including its Vision Circle, Innovation Board, Spirit of XPRIZE and other circles of donors.

Prior to joining XPRIZE, Shawn served as Vice President of Advancement, Marketing and Communications and Chief of Staff at Ripon College. He led the largest and most successful philanthropic campaign in the college’s history - The Forever Ripon Campaign - which raised \$120 million over five years. As Chief of Staff and a member of the Administrative Council, he worked closely with the Board of Trustees and served as a trusted advisor, key communicator, and strategic partner for the President.

Special Guests & Panelists



Shelly Rothman is the Founder and Executive Director of the Foxhead Regenerative Agriculture Project. She studied Natural Resources Management at Nova University of Applied Sciences.

Based in Green Lake, FoxRAP is restoring our roots in small farms and local food to build communities where people and land work together. Our Mission: Cultivate a local agriculture network that benefits our community and ecosystem. Our Vision: A thriving, resilient alliance

of diverse farmers and farm allies working together to realize the full potential of our people, environment, and economy. Our Pillars: Connect community, grow local food and farm products, preserve farms, restore our ecosystem.

Onkuri Majumdar is a wildlife conservationist, focusing on ending wildlife trafficking by training and supporting governments and the private sector. She has provided investigative support to law enforcement through analysis and intelligence gathering on tiger, pangolin, ivory and exotic pet trafficking syndicates, and has been deputized by a police agency to go undercover to gather evidence.

Over a career spanning nearly 20 years, she has trained over 900 officials in Asia and Africa. These include police, forest, Customs officers who attended her sessions on preventing, detecting, and investigating wildlife crime, using covert technology and building strong prosecution cases that result in convictions. In the private sector, she has trained officials from airlines and banks on recognizing and reporting wildlife crime within their sectors, effectively acting as eyes and ears for law enforcement. Onkuri strongly believes that wildlife and nature have a right to thrive, and should not have to 'pay' for their continued existence by being useful to humans. She hopes her work will lead to long term upgrades and more general participation in systems of nature protection, which are currently quite weak and non-inclusive.

Her work has been featured in print and television media, including in a National Geographic series, Crimes Against Nature.



Mat Boerson is the Co-Owner and Livestock Manager of Boerson Farm. Boerson Farm is committed to Regenerative Agriculture that builds soil and reduces our dependence on outside inputs such as commercial fertilizer and fossil fuel. Our guiding principle is to work in concert with nature and thereby improve the land while providing high quality produce and meat. Rotational grazing, compost production, perennial crops, and limited tillage increase soil

health and build up soil carbon. We believe carbon can be removed from the atmosphere and stored in the earth through the magic of photosynthesis, and at the same time enhance the viability of farmers and the overall stability of our community's food supply. The farm is home to Suffolk Punch draft horses as well as honeybees. Boerson Farm is entering its 17th season producing food for our local communities.



John Strauser is a research scientist in the Department of Agronomy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. John's background is in Human Geography, and earned a doctorate in Natural Resources and Environmental Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research and outreach focus on the social processes that drive bio-physical landscape change by employing the concept of place-making. As a 6th generation Wisconsinite, John

is committed to working with communities to have a future where agricultural landscapes throughout Wisconsin and the upper Midwest serve to enhance water quality, build soil health, respect the dignity of labor, and strive toward racial and social justice.

Alan Laubsch is an entrepreneur, connector, and a thought leader in risk management. His mission is to protect Earth's most vital ecosystems by democratizing natural capital investment. Alan is CEO of Generation Blue, a venture studio dedicated to building a liquid global natural capital marketplace. Previously, Alan established Natural Capital Markets at Lykke AG, and listed the world's first mangrove and Blue Carbon backed blockchain token (TREE). Alan has over two decades of risk management experience with leading financial institutions, and was a founding member of the RiskMetrics Group, a JPMorgan spin-off. Alan is an avid kitesurfer and an ocean lover.



Steve Galster is the Founder of Freeland, and a native of Green Lake. He graduated from GLHS in 1980, went on to get his Bachelor and Master's Degrees at Grinnell College and George Washington University, then ventured out internationally to study and address threats to human and environmental security. He conducted investigations into wars in Afghanistan, Central America, and Africa, as well as human trafficking in the former Soviet Union and USA, exposing

the links between narcotics, arms and wildlife trafficking. Eventually he formed Freeland in order to address the increasing convergence of criminal threats to people and wildlife by helping to converge good governmental and civil society responses.

Molly Ferrill Molly Ferrill is a photographer, filmmaker, musician, and National Geographic Explorer dedicated to documenting the changing relationship between people and nature. She strives to spread compassion and a greater appreciation of animals and the natural world through storytelling. Her work has been featured in National Geographic Magazine, National Geographic News, National Geographic Television, The Discovery Channel, and the BBC. She is the Director of Photography Collaborations at Envision Kindness, and she has documented wildlife trade and conservation with Freeland since 2012. Molly is the producer of Freeland Film Festival.



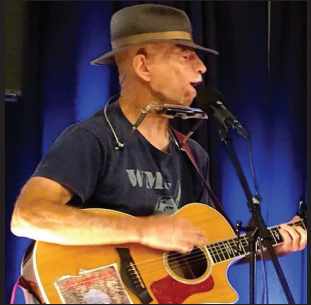
Special Guests & Panelists

Musicians



Johnny Keach is an indie rock-pop singer-songwriter from Los Angeles, California known for his raw, authentic sound, emotionally charged lyrics, and infectious melodies. His work draws inspiration from legends like The Beatles, Elliot Smith, and The Strokes, blending classic rock influences with a modern twist that captures the essence of vulnerability, introspection, and hope. www.johnnykeach.com

Brian Drow has busked and played venues around the world offering his own brand of pop/folk music. His repertoire includes both original songs and covers of a wide variety of artists. He has recorded and produced dozens of albums over the years. Drow also is author of the book “Memoirs of a Busker” and directed and produced the documentary “Learning Curve”. www.briandrowmusic.wixsite.com/briandrow



Zipporah Keach is a third culture kid whose voice reflects a life lived across Hong Kong, Egypt, Jamaica, London, and Thailand. Now based in Los Angeles, she brings a soulful, globally rooted perspective to her music. A rising vocalist and storyteller, she also curates travel and food adventures on Instagram at [@shedoesliving](https://www.instagram.com/shedoesliving).

Injiano Saji has been creating music and performing since the 1980s but only recently started devoting time to self-producing his own music compositions. He performs as a solo performer as Injiano Saji Villoth; with the duo Lindo Prazer; and as a part of jazz-folk band Mambo Surfers. He also publishes music under the pseudonym of The Innocent Bystanders. He has contributed original work to the Warrior Songs project, and to Freeland Film Festival.

www.mambosurfers.com



Freeland Film Festival
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CELEBRATING OUR PLANET

September 12 -14, 2025 | Green Lake, Wisconsin

www.freeland.org/film-festival

