

## PALOS VERDES PENINSULA

# Conservancy film fest grows

**San Pedro:** Warner Grand Theatre plays host to first round of showings

**Hermosa Beach:** Second venue will offer same film bill next month

**By Cynthia Washicko**  
*cwashicko@seng.com*  
*@CynthiaWashicko on Twitter*

In its third year, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy's annual film festival will feature 15 films in two hours — and this year the event will be held at two South Bay venues.

Organizers of the Wild & Scenic Film Festival plan to screen all 15

films Jan. 22, at the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro, where it's always been held, and then three weeks later on Feb. 12 at the Hermosa Beach Community Theatre.

Adding a second venue expands the local festival's reach in the hopes of attracting a larger South Bay audience, said Andrea Vona, executive director for the conservancy.

When the film festival first

kicked off in 2015, roughly 900 people attended that year's showing, and several hundred have turned out in the subsequent years, she said.

Viewers are drawn to the festival looking for something they haven't seen before, and organizers hope to inspire attendees by showcasing a wide variety of films.

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David Lama climbs the first ascent of the Baatara Gorge near Tannourine, Lebanon on June 17, 2015 in "Avaatara." COURTESY IMAGE

# Festival

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"It's a nice way to start the year — there's some gorgeous scenery and encouraging and optimistic looks at things," Vona said.

The Wild & Scenic Film Festival began as a local version of the national Wild & Scenic Film Festival held in Nevada City, which features environmental and adventure films.

Started by the South Yuba River Citizens League, that festival aims to put local conservation efforts into a global perspective with films from around the world, according to the festival website.

Localizing the larger festival has the added benefit of reminding viewers that the conservancy's environmental efforts are part of a global push to protect and preserve outdoor spaces around the world, said Susan Wilcox, director of development for the conservancy.

This year, the films range in length and topic, from "Nature Rx," a one-minute comedic short, to a half-hour film about a big-wave surfer turned coastal activist.

From those films, Wilcox weeded out films that the conservancy wasn't



The 2016 Wild & Scenic Film Festival on Tour at the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro. COURTESY PHOTO

interested in screening, such as those that deal exclusively with environmental activism or lobbying, which the conservancy doesn't participate in, she said.

"We like to choose films that both celebrate the beauty of the world outdoors and provide a look at the different kinds of adventures that people can enjoy," Wilcox said.

Once Wilcox narrowed down the field of films, a group of about 12 conservancy staff members and volunteers screened portions of each film and as a group decided which ones will be used during the festival, Vona said.

"Mostly, it's a way to gather people who enjoy learning about the outdoors or different environmental issues, bringing everybody together in one afternoon to share this experience all together," Vona said.