

'Wild and Scenic' films screen in Hermosa Beach on Sunday

Genie Davis 2 hrs ago (0)



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The Wild & Scenic Film Festival is touring the South Bay, with screenings at the Hermosa Beach Community Center at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is the force behind bringing the festival to the beach cities.

According to Susan Wilcox, director of development for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, the festival, which began in 1983, is now the largest film festival of its kind in the U.S. The festival partners with hosts such as the PVPLC to screen films in a variety of locations, but begins with a three-day presentation near Sacramento.

Locally, the Conservancy is presenting a two-hour slice of the festival, which offers a selection of adventurous and inspirational films about nature. This is the Conservancy's third year presenting a segment of the festival's offerings. The organization got involved with the festival when Patagonia assisted in the festival's reach-out to nonprofit groups. The 2015 festival was presented in San Pedro, with the conservancy adding a Redonda Beach location in 2016.

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"We're delighted to be in Hermosa Beach this year for the 2017 festival," said Wilcox. The screenings also ran last weekend at the Warner Grand in San Pedro to enthusiastic crowds.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy chooses films to present that align with its mission.

"We are not activist-focused, so our selection begins by looking for films that speak to protection and preservation of land, with beautiful scenery and exciting adventures," Wilcox explains. "We also enjoy having a selection of films from around the world, so that our audience takes away a feeling that land preservation is an international undertaking that is making progress—and that each person can make a difference in our own community."

Wilcox adds she believes "the best available land in the South Bay" is a result of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy's work.

The festival has been a success from its inception. Wilcox works on the first round of film selections, then collaborates with colleagues to determine the final film choices.

"Last year, I also had the opportunity for feedback from a supporter who is a local and accomplished filmmaker, which was wonderful," Wilcox added, predicting Hermosa audiences will enjoy their afternoon watching these films as much as San Pedro audiences did.

With one of the films, "To Slow Down and Breathe," about slack lining, Wilcox set up an actual slack line for audience members to try out during the festival's intermission. In San Pedro she had good response to this extracurricular activity. Festival participants were eager to try the experience, which will also be available in Hermosa. "Our slack-line is only 6 inches off the ground, so it's safe, in case you're wondering," she said.



Wilcox said the festival "celebrates the importance and beauty of natural land, and that each person who becomes involved makes a difference" to the environment.

With 15 short films being presented in Hermosa, Wilcox is hard pressed to choose a favorite, but she chooses three that have moved her the most.

"For humor and brevity, 'Nature Rx.' It spoofs prescription meds and offers 'nature' as the cure to human ills, then 'warns' you about the side effects, such as quitting your job or taking yourself less seriously. It's a very fun film," she said. "For poignancy, I'd say 'Denali,' which celebrates the bond between a man who has been treated for cancer, and the dog, now dying, who helped him through his cancer ordeal. And for scenery and the celebration of one person's impact, I'd pick 'The Fisherman's Son,' which takes place in Chile and then Hawaii."

The Wild and Scenic Film Festival screens at 4 p.m. on Sunday at the Hermosa Beach Community Center. Tickets for the film festival are \$15 at the door, \$10 with advance sales online at pvplc.org.

