

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA

Film series begins with grandeur of Yosemite

By Donna Littlejohn

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Nature is best appreciated in person.

But when the art of filmmaking captures and tells the story of the natural world and its beauty, it can be a close second.

With that in mind, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is launching its first film series today with a screening of "Yosemite: A Gathering of Spirit" at the Warner Grand Theatre, 478 W. Sixth St., San Pedro.

"Films celebrating the beauty and wonder of nature are a way to bring the community together," said Andrea Vona, executive director of the conservancy. "We've had occasional lectures and other ways for people to come together, but we thought a film series would appeal to a potentially wider age range."

Today's opening show features a special program and raffle drawing at 3:30 p.m. and the documentary, which runs 35 minutes long, at 4:30 p.m. Released to celebrate the 150th anniversary of America's national parks, "Yosemite" tells the story of the 1864 Yosemite Grant signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

Admission is \$10 for adults and free for those 18 and younger. Raffle proceeds will go toward native plant restoration at the White Point Nature Preserve in San Pedro. Special guests at the screening will include U.S. Rep. Janice Hahn, D-San Pedro, who will speak about a bill that would expand Yosemite's boundaries.

The Beauty of Nature film series — featuring five films altogether and running through November — also is a way to spread the word about the work the conservancy is doing, said Susan Wilcox, director

- WANT TO GO?

What: Beauty of Nature film series sponsored by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

When: Opens today with a screening of "Yosemite: A Gathering of Spirit" at 4:30 p.m. (special program at 3:30 p.m.) at the Warner Grand Theatre, 478 W. Sixth St., San Pedro. Four films to follow on June 14, Aug. 23, Sept. 11 and Nov. 22. For complete film schedule, visit <http://bit.ly/1lw7zZn>.

Cost: Admission to the first and last films are \$10 for adults and free for the other three films as seating allows (some venues have limited space). Series tickets with guaranteed seating are available for \$25 at <http://bit.ly/1gX3P20>.

Information: www.pvplc.org/ or call 310-541-7613

of development for the conservancy.

"We want to make sure more people on the Peninsula know about our open space and the hikes we arrange," she said.

Established 25 years ago, the conservancy preserves undeveloped land as open space, often restoring it with native plants and habitat that, in turn, draws native California wildlife back to the area, including songbirds, the Palos Verdes blue butterfly and foxes. The nonprofit currently oversees about 1,600 acres of open space on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The group also sponsors monthly hikes led by volunteer naturalists, historians and geologists with a mission to educate the public about the area's natural habitat and history.

"It's important for people to care about our open space and to feel a connection (to nature) in our densely populated communities,"

Wilcox said. "We would hope that people would walk away (from the films) with an understanding of our volunteer opportunities and walks — and that they'd join us and volunteer."

Among the conservancy's opportunities: planting native habitat at the White Point Nature Preserve following the Paseo del Mar landslide that required underground anchors and de-watering systems that disrupted some areas of the 102-acre park; and joining the conservancy for its Earth Day celebration and garden planting from 9 a.m. to noon April 20, also at White Point.

Except for the first and last films (that charge \$10 for adults), all the shows offer free admission, although some venues have limited seating available. Series tickets with guaranteed seating are \$25.

Other films planned for the series are:

- "Riding Giants," a look at the history and popularity of surfing, 6:30 p.m. June 14 at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium and followed by a 9 p.m. grunion run on the beach;

- "Rivers and Tides," a documentary on sculptor Andy Goldsworthy that will be presented outdoors, Hollywood Bowl-style, with a box dinner (for purchase) at the Palos Verdes Art Center at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 23;

- "More Than Honey" hailed as a definitive work on the subject of bee colonies and the disappearance of honeybee populations worldwide, 5:30 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Peninsula Center Library; and

- "Kon-Tiki," the true story of five friends sailing on a fragile balsa wood raft along an ancient path 4,300 miles across the Pacific Ocean in an adventure that takes them through tidal waves, sharks and other dangers, 7:30 p.m. Nov. 22 at the Warner Grand Theatre.