

Wild and Scenic Film Festival lands in San Pedro in time for Earth Day

8th Wild & Scenic Film Festival will take place at historic Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro April 23



The eighth annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival will stop in San Pedro on Sunday, April 23. The two-hour short film festival, which begins at 4 p.m., at the historic Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro, features stories about the Grand Tetons in Wyoming to the Scottish Highlands and focus on preservation efforts including that of the monarch butterfly. Pictured is a still from 'Endangered Migration: A Monarch Butterfly Story.' (photo courtesy of Wild & Scenic Film Festival)

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PUBLISHED: April 19, 2023 at 10:27 a.m. | UPDATED: April 19, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.



The annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival will stop in San Pedro on Sunday, April 23 to not only celebrate Earth Day, but to also aid the programs of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, which has preserved more than 1,700 acres on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The two-hour short-film festival, which begins at 4 p.m., at the historic Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro, features stories about the Grand Tetons in Wyoming to the Scottish Highlands and focus on preservation efforts including that of the monarch butterfly.

"The Land Conservancy is excited to present this film festival to benefit the White Point Nature Preserve," said Adrienne Mohan, the PVPLC's executive director. "The films are curated to inspire people of all ages to appreciate nature, science and the love of the outdoors during this fun and adventurous afternoon."

The film festival is the largest annual fundraiser for the South Yuba Citizens League, which started 21 years ago to "raise funds and awareness to recover California's wild salmon and protect the Yuba River watershed," according to its website.

The organization takes the festival on tour to about 150 events each year, including the festival in San Pedro on April 23.

Susan Wilcox, director of development at PVPLC, said they chose around 15 short films from more than 100 that the SYCL featured in its festival.

"Whether you're a grade schooler or a mom or grandparents, the film topics are appealing and interesting and it's a nice shared experience," Wilcox said. "It sort of takes you around the world on a bunch of different topics. lighthearted and serious, and it makes for great conversations."

For the three-minute short "30° Below," Oregon-based filmmakers Kevin McGee and Brandon Bondehagen traveled to Alaska to follow the relationship between a musher and his sled dogs.

In a phone interview, McGee said they were looking at ways to find a good story and promote their business Good Buddy Co. when he heard about Thom Walker, the partner of his sister-in-law, who runs the business Friendly Arctic Adventures in Alaska.

McGee said he always fantasized about going to the “great white north,” and ended up north of Fairbanks in February 2019 when it was about 7 degrees. By the time they left five days later, they were challenged by temperatures that dropped to 30 below as well as their drone not flying and the autofocus not working on cameras because of the cold.

“We would keep batteries in a cooler full of hot water bottles to keep the batteries warm, so they would so they wouldn’t die as soon as you put them in the camera,” McGee said.

The close relationship between Walker and his 20 dogs was explored in the short.

“The dogs are really, really sweet and they kind of stole the show,” McGee said. “Thom is a sweet guy too. You can tell how much he loves the dogs.”

The PVPLC will also celebrate Earth Day through an online auction that runs through April 24 and will benefit White Point Nature Education Center and Preserve activities. The auction features items such as vacation homes and fine dining.

Earth Day at the White Point Preserve in San Pedro will be hosted by the PVPLC on Saturday, April 22, from 9 a.m. to noon. Aside from beatification efforts, the event will feature family-friendly activities like a guarded nature walk, scavenger hunt, and a nature-based art project.

Tickets are \$15 online or \$20 at the door.

The Warner Grand is located at 478 W. 6th Street in San Pedro.

For more information or to sign up, visit pvplc.org, or wildandscenicfilmfestival.org.

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