



Annual Environmental Film Festival to Return in April

By Kellam Nelson, Earthscope Reporter

(This article was published in the Marin Scope Community Newspaper of March 23-29, 2004)

The only festival of its kind in the Bay Area is returning to Marin this April. Thirteen films from around the world will be shown over three days.

The Second Annual Marin Environmental Film Festival, presented by The Environmental Forum of Marin, and its partner, The California Film Institute, is being held on Thursday, April 1, Saturday, April 3, and Sunday, April 4, at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center in San Rafael.

Festival coordinator Carrol Haggerty said the festival is unique and different from any other in the nation because of its focus on tough environmental issues, and how we can help create a sustainable world. The films address issues such as alternative energy, biodiversity, and global warming. It does not cross over into "appreciating nature from a kayak, while you're mountain climbing, or while you're mountain biking," like most other film festivals include, said Haggerty. Other film festivals also usually include social justice films, which are often shown on PBS. Although those types of films give out positive messages, they are beyond the relative theme of the festival.

The festival is unique beyond just the types of films that are being shown. Following several of the programs, viewers will have the chance to participate in discussions with issue experts and the filmmakers.

"Some of these (films) touch on issues that might be new for people, some of them get a little technical, and certainly people have questions after they see some of the films," said Haggerty. "So, we have Q and A and panel discussions after most of our programs."

The Environmental Forum of Marin created the festival to bring information to the public to help promote a "sustainable world." It is an attempt to reach a broad audience over a short period of time, and gives the public a chance to learn about the environment without having to invest very much of their time or money (the tickets cost \$9 per adults, and \$5.75).

Although this year's festival only includes films created by invited filmmakers, many independent filmmakers made submissions for the festival, hoping that their films would make it onto the San Rafael silver screen. Excited that the festival is receiving so much attention, and has been popping up on film maker's "radar," Haggerty has decided to open next year's festival to submissions. This will allow the festival to expand, show many more films, and reach many more people about even more environmental issues.

The films in this year's festival cover many different topics. One film, "French Fries to Go," is about an eco-friendly automobile. The film discusses and explains how the vehicle runs off of bio-fuel made from used fast-food oil. Another film, "Power Shift," discusses the various alternative energy

systems that humans are capable of using, all of which are much more beneficial towards our planet and to us. Both films try to raise awareness of our environmentally destructive habits and behaviors, and discuss the options and possibilities that people can take advantage of to be less corrosive towards our Earth.

The first annual festival took place last April. Although much smaller and less publicized than this year's festival, it was extremely successful. The Environmental Forum of Marin is building off of last year's success with more marketing and an expanded program of films, and hopes that each and every year the festival will continue to grow.

Other festival festivities include the opening reception on Thursday, April 1, which will include refreshments and music provided by Hot Buttered Rum String Band, a sustainable food tasting event, which will include organic dishes prepared by local chefs.

The Best of Festival and Earth Day Every Day Award ceremonies will conclude the festival on Sunday, April 4.

To learn more about the films being shown or to purchase tickets online, visit <http://www.marinenvironmentalfilmfestival.org> Tickets can also be purchased at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, located at 1118 4th Street in San Rafael. There is a \$1.00 service charge per ticket for all online orders.

The Environmental Forum of Marin was created to protect and enhance the environment by educating its members and the citizens of Marin on key environmental issues. It conducts annual advocacy training programs and provides continuing education opportunities for its members and the public. It encourages environment-related education in Marin public and private schools, and also recognizes ecologically friendly local businesses.

RESOURCES:

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