

Inspired activism: ‘Regenerate’ at Wild & Scenic Film Festival, running Thursday through Monday

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A still from “Honeyland,” the story of Hatidze, who lives with her ailing mother in the mountains of Macedonia, making a living cultivating honey using ancient beekeeping traditions.

KNOW & GO

WHO: South Yuba River Citizen's League

WHAT: 18th Annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival

WHERE: Various venues in Grass Valley and Nevada City

WHEN: Thursday Jan. 16 –

What began as a fundraiser for South Yuba River Citizen's League (SYRCL), has expanded to some 250 events a year nationwide. That flagship – The Wild & Scenic Film Festival – returns to Nevada County for five days of films, hikes, workshops, art exhibits, music and camaraderie, beginning today and running through Monday.

“The festival began 18 years ago as a fundraiser for SYRCL but as their tagline says, ‘where activism gets inspired,’ a big goal here is to inform people and inspire people to take action on the issues that are

Monday Jan. 20

HOW: Full Schedule, tickets and more information at <https://www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/>

effecting both locally as well as globally,” Communications Coordinator Eric Dunn said.

The 18th annual festival brings education, awareness and inspiration to attendees and a bit of an economic boon to local businesses in what would otherwise be considered a slow time for local tourism. The festival team, lead for the second year by Festival Director Jori

Emory, works hard to make sure there is a wide mix in the over 100 films shown, so that one does not need to be labelled an environmentalist to enjoy them.

However, Dunn said, the festival is environmentally and activism centric, “A lot of our films have a lot to do with environmental issues, (such as) climate change although we also have a nice mix of adventure and feel good films as well, all relating to the natural world.” Aside from the films, the festival serves as a location for people to come to learn and interact. “We’ve got great workshops for people to take part in,” Dunn said, “We’ve got talks with filmmakers and activists. And so, it really is a central location for people interested in learning about this sort of thing or those interested in activism to be part of that in a group setting.”

This year’s theme is “regeneration.” Dunn said, “With that in mind the goal is celebrating the power of renewal and rebirth both in hopes for positive change in the world as well as how our collective action can lead to a healthier planet.”

The regeneration theme is also supplemented in artwork created by the festival’s official artist Obi Kaufmann. Kaufmann will be available to interact with as he creates an original piece Saturday at Gallery 125, (421 Broad Street). Sponsored by Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, the free event includes beer sampling as you watch. Kaufmann’s completed piece will be included in the festival auction which closes at 7 p.m. at Miners Foundry.

Some of the festival standouts this year include a great mix of feature length films including, “Into the Canyon.” Dunn said, “This visually inspiring film is a story about two folks who head in on a mission to through-hike the Grand Canyon.” He explained most people hike the canyon rim to rim or go down the river on a boat, but this is a journey across the length of the canyon without trails and in pretty treacherous as well as some pristine, untouched land that continues to be threatened. Dunn said, “Part of their mission was to show people what can be impacted if we allow things like uranium mining to continue to occur in the Grand Canyon.”

There are also several films focused on the area fire issues. “Not If, But When: Wildfire Solutions” was created by local filmmakers Radu Sava and Rebekah Hood-Sava and highlights a program that SYRCL is involved in, along with the forest restoration and the North Yuba Watershed. Other fire related films include “After the Fire” and “All That Remains” that both relate to Northern California wildfires and the impact of those events. Workshops on the topic will also take place during the festival.

Patagonia produced the eleven-minute short, “Life of Pie,” an adventure film that

features two female mountain bike enthusiasts who moved to a small community in Colorado and the impact they have made there.

The ever popular (and sold out) 3D films take place tonight at the Del Oro Theatre in Grass Valley as SYRCL works to expand the festival from its roots in Nevada City to encompass and impact Grass Valley as well. Films are shown throughout the weekend at Gold Miners Inn and Grass Valley Elks Lodge and the Del Oro hosts Saturday morning kid's films. Other events in Grass Valley include a free awards and art reception this afternoon at Gold Miners Inn, a party at Grass Valley Brewing Company Saturday night with live music by Undercover and a "Locals Night" of award winners showing at the Del Oro Monday evening.

"Niesenani Ni" (which translates to "I am Niesenani") takes place Sunday afternoon. Members of the Niesenani Rancheria will be on hand to discuss their partnership with the Nevada City Film Festival and Nevada County Arts Council in making a film about their endangered language. Their guided hike held Saturday afternoon is sold out.

Another excursion, hosted by The Venture Out Project is also sold out, but their free "Coffee Talk: Queer in the Outdoors" is open to all at Three Forks Bakery Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. Founded in 2015, the group has led thousands of LGBTQ+ folk on outdoor adventures. Executive Director Perry Cohen will lead an informal discussion around being queer in the outdoors.

Take note, festival headquarters have moved to the downstairs of the Nevada City Vets Hall. Opening ceremonies are free Friday afternoon featuring festival staff, Niesenani tribal members, and other special guests along with refreshments and tasting from Barefoot Bubbly and Sierra Nevada Brewing Company.

In an effort to reduce paper waste, the full schedule is available on SYRCLS office app. Search for "WSFF" and download it to your phone.

While the purpose of the festival is to inspire others, Dunn said he finds the community to be inspirational itself. "We have an amazing team here and an amazing team of volunteers that come in to make this all happen. It's super inspiring to see it all come together."

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