

'Saving Yellowwood' centerpiece of Wild and Scenic Film Festival Sunday



Protesters gather at the Yellowwood State Forest office in Brown County Nov. 9, 2017, to protest the timber sale of more than 1,700 trees in old growth areas of the forest. The logging protest is the subject of a 15-minute film that will be featured Sunday at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater.

(Chris Howell/The Herald-Times)

Chris Howell

By Carol Kugler | Herald Times | Jan 11, 2018

There will be a couple of firsts when the Wild and Scenic Film Festival comes to Bloomington on Sunday. It's the first time the festival will be in Bloomington, and it will premiere a 15-minute film, "Saving Yellowwood," that will be the centerpiece and the final film to be shown at the festival. "Saving Yellowwood" features both the recent timber sale of trees in the wilderness area of Yellowwood State Forest and the protests of the sale.

Creators John Boggs, a native of Brown County, and Hannah Boggs, of Monroe County, began by documenting the early days of the movement to save 1,733 old-forest trees that were part of a timber sale. On Nov. 9, 2017, the timber sale took place at the state forest in Brown County with about 200 nearby protesters chanting and holding up signs.

Talking about the film, John Boggs explained he was commissioned by the Indiana

Forest Alliance, as well as friends and family, to make the film for the festival. It was a difficult undertaking, since the sale took place not long before the festival, but Boggs was happy to take it on.

"I've been doing videography and doing shorts for businesses and my own personal passions for years," he said. Growing up in Brown County, he explained, he was "personally concerned" about the timber sale of older, larger trees. "I love Brown County in general," he said. "The trees and forest and the forest experience here, it's paramount to who we are."

It saddened him to watch as trees from Yellowwood were driven down the main road of Nashville as wood on logging trucks.

"Saving Yellowwood" captures scenes from the encampment at the end of Possum Trot Road near the wilderness area, as well as parts of the timber sale and protest. It includes the voices of local activists as well as people from other regions of the state, discussing how logging affects everything from recreation and ecology to the area economy, Boggs said.

"There's really an outcry of concern of the logging and the increasing rate of the logging in this region," Boggs said. "We wanted to give them a platform to say what's in their hearts and minds."

Boggs hopes the film also shows the passion that people have for the wilderness area, and nature in general. He hopes "Saving Yellowwood" inspires people into action, not necessarily to continue the argument or to point fingers.

But Boggs does talk about how areas that have had timber cutting along trails and near Yellowwood Lake have affected him, with walking in the woods a less-than-hoped-for experience. "At some point you have to acknowledge that (timber cutting) is impacting the experience," he said.

"I helped build a section of the trail when I was in college," he said. "There are plenty of people who we interviewed that say we're on those trails all the time and they are unsafe."

He's hoping "Saving Yellowwood" allows people to feel how important trees and forest are when people are outside in natural areas among larger, more mature trees. "If we ever hope to get back to that, we have to leave these places alone and let them mature," he said. "The people here really value the forest experience, and you can't do that with 20- to 30-year-old trees."

Besides reaching people at the film festival, Boggs hopes his film can be shown elsewhere, to further spread the message of the importance of trees.

Other films

The first of the 10 short films to be shown will be "Pale Blue Dot."

Two of the short films, part of a six-film "Faces of the Forest" project, are the creation of Indiana University senior Sarah Johnson of Fishers. Johnson's films share how six people use the forest in different ways, from trail running to foraging for specific foods found in wooded areas of Indiana.

"It changed the way I think of Indiana forests," Johnson said. Although Hoosier woods don't have the striking beauty found out West, she said, the films "helped me see the beauty in my own state and what (forests) can give back to you."

Johnson will be at Sunday's festival, and is excited to be able to be there to witness how people react to her films.

The 3-year-old festival had been in Indianapolis, with about 400 people attending, according to Sandra Messner, outreach director for Indiana Forest Alliance. The festival serves as a fundraising event for the alliance. This year's event in Bloomington is expected to be larger — Messner said they are expecting about 600 to attend — and to be "more elaborate," with local celebrities.

About the festival

WHAT: Wild and Scenic Film Festival, a benefit for the Indiana Forest Alliance.

WHERE: Buskirk-Chumley Theater, 114 E. Kirkwood Ave.

WHEN: Sunday. Doors open at 5 p.m.; show runs 5:30-8 p.m.

MORE: Tickets cost \$25, or \$15 for youth younger than 18 and students with ID. Tickets are available at the Buskirk-Chumley box office in advance, at the door or at www.bctboxoffice.org. The festival will include music, short films, raffles of 25 prizes and information about the Indiana Forest Alliance and its upcoming lobbying day to talk to state legislators about Indiana Senate Bill 275, which would protect 30 percent of state forests from logging.

People will be able to purchase refreshments both from the Big Cheeze food truck and in the theater, talk to members of the Indiana Forest Alliance and enter raffles. Music by Tim Grimm, Cari Ray and Malcolm Dalglish.