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MEDIA RELEASE

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4th Annual Colorado Environmental Film Festival Approaching Fast Nov 5-7th, 2009, American Mountaineering Center, 710 10th St Golden, CO 80401

The 4th Annual Colorado Environmental Film Festival, presented by the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, will take place from Nov 5-7th at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden, Colorado.

The 2009 festival will present 30+ films over three days, an environmental photography exhibit and competition, numerous socializing events at which audiences can meet filmmakers, a filmmaker forum where audiences can ask established filmmaker questions about their art, a children's film segment, free electronics recycling, and more.

The Colorado Environmental Film Festival is also pleased to announce that it will present the *Front Range Premiere of Stephanie Soechtig's "Tapped."* "Tapped"— from the producers of "Who Killed the Electric Car" and "I.O.U.S.A"— is a timely documentary that takes a behind-the-scenes look at the unregulated and unseen world of an industry that aims to privatize and sell back the one resource that ought never become a commodity: our water.

"Tapped" will screen on November the 5th and November the 7th at 7:00 pm.

The festival will also feature seasoned environmental filmmaker John deGraaf's "What's the Economy for Anyway?," local Colorado filmmaker Christopher Fauchere's "The Great Squeeze," Sundance veteran and local experimental filmmaker Tony Gault's "Fossil Light," and numerous other local, national, and international films.

Tickets for the 2009 CEFF are on sale at www.ceff.net and at the Denver Flagship and Boulder REI stores. For additional information on films, the festival program, speakers, exhibitors, and tickets, please visit www.ceff.net or call CEFF Co-Chair Joe Brown at 763-360-8340.

Exclusive filmmaker interviews are available.

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting quality environmental education opportunities by facilitating communication, coordination and professional development among the varied environmental education programs in the state. CAEE inspires and supports leadership for a sustainable future. CAEE's programs serve the expanding needs of the environmental education community and strive to advance environmental education. For more information on programs and membership, or to view the Colorado Environmental Education Directory, visit www.caee.org.

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A Sampling of 2009 CEFF Films by Colorado Filmmakers (With Filmmaker Contact Info)

1.) "The Great Squeeze"

Directed by Christopher Fauchere -- local filmmakers and CEFF veteran
<http://www.thegreatsqueeze.com/Trailer.html>

The Great Squeeze picks up where the documentary Energy Crossroads left off. Our dependence on cheap and abundant fossil fuels has been feeding the engine of our economic system for the past 200 years. Although it has lifted modern civilizations to new heights, prosperity has come at a tremendous price. We are now at a point where humanity's demands for natural resources far exceed the earth's capacity to sustain us. The extraction and the consumption of these resources in the past two centuries have changed our climate and ecosystems so significantly, that a new geological era had to be created. These man-made threats become even more ominous when you look at them together as part of a global trend.

The GS then goes back in time and takes us on a journey through history when past civilizations made the same mistake of growing too fast, depleting their natural resources and ultimately collapsing. Instead of the usual band-aid approaches, The GS challenges us to learn from history and transition towards a more sustainable economy that values our environment. Today we are at a turning point in history. Our current paradigm of unending economic growth has become a threat to our prosperity and the long-term viability of this planet for future generations. The GS is a call to action and gives us a framework for the changes that must take place.

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2.) "Fossil Light"

Directed by Tony Gault -- University of Denver film professor

Convoys of exhaust belching "tundra buggies" leave Churchill each November morning, giving thousands of tourists every year the chance to photograph polar bears up close and personal. And every year, the effects of climate change are felt more intimately. Hudson Bay takes longer to freeze over, and more bears starve every year as a result. Ironically, most trip organizers market themselves as "eco-tourist" agencies with names like "Natural Habitat" and "Wildlife Adventures." And yet, there is a reluctance in Churchill to see the tundra buggies as a problem.

But my trip to Churchill wasn't motivated so much by these disturbing facts. I am interested by the obsessive behavior I observed in Churchill, as tourists glued themselves behind cameras, intent on "getting the shot." I am fascinated by the human impulse to photograph things that are disappearing. I am interested in the objectification of our natural world and our subsequent separation from it. I am interested in living a life connected to nature and leaving Disneyland behind.

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3.) Perchance to Dream

Directed by Lauren Kimball-- Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design student

After forty years of captivity, 'Perchance to Dream' offers a new perspective in the life of Miami Sea Aquarium's star performer, Lolita the Killer Whale. Brutally taken from her family and home waters in

Puget Sound, Washington and flown across the country to live in Miami, Florida, Lolita is expected to perform daily to an enthusiastic crowd; a crowd completely ignorant to the plight of this gentle spirit. Since the death of her tank mate, Hugo, Lolita's the sole Orca at the aquarium. She dazzles and she amazes; but what happens behind those intelligent and soulful eyes? What happens when the lights go off and the audience departs? What goes through the mind of the world's top predator turned circus clown? Where do the dreams of a lonely, sentient creature take her when the moon's full and the only sound is her own steady heart beat? Solace Skies Productions invites you to take a journey into the life of a performing animal and ask the moral questions if whether captivity for sake of amusement is worth its price. This animated short lets the audience experience Lolita's loneliness, heart ache, and unshakeable spirit as she braves a solitary life in the world's smallest Orca tank. Witness through her eyes the world she once knew, the reality that is, and her dream of what could be. Based on true circumstance, this film dares you to reach over the boundary of social acceptance and embrace another living creature with empathy instead of applause.

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4.) Red Lady: The Battle for Your Mountains

Directed by Jeremy Rubingh -- Colorado Filmmaker

RED LADY The Battle for Your Mountains explores the story of a mountain and a town in conflict with a mining industry that can purchase public land for five dollars an acre or less under the 1872 mining law. A massive molybdenum mine on Red Lady in Crested Butte, Colorado at the headwaters of the Colorado River could destroy the local environment and economy and potentially carry its impacts downstream to hundreds of other communities.

This documentary weaves together interviews ranging from current and past mayors of Crested Butte to the president of U.S. Energy, Corp., the company proposing the large-scale mine on Red Lady. The film explores the affects of a mine in the area and the far-reaching consequences of the most toxic industry in the United States. This documentary reminds us that we are all downstream and actions taken in the mountains of Colorado directly affect people living in San Diego, or anywhere west of the Continental Divide. Aerials of idyllic Crested Butte and the Elk Mountains juxtaposed with other operating mines in the region give a potent and somewhat frightening look into what could become of the area. Cultures and communities that believe in the sanctity of a mountain still exist...

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5.) Alternative Ways to Grow What You Love

Directed by Alison Greer -- University of Colorado at Boulder student

A documentary that follows four people in my town that are working to change our food system through alternative agriculture practices. Through each character a different aspect of growing food is explored. A guerilla gardener that was charged by the city, a permaculturalist that tore down part of her house to build an attached greenhouse, a urban farmer that farms his neighbors front and backyards, and a restaurant owner that grows all of his food for the restaurant in his front and backyard in suburbia. Through the stories of these four people, changing our unsustainable food system is shown to be a positive progression instead of a step backward.

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6.) Tar Creek

Directed by Matt Meyers—Colorado Filmmaker

<http://www.tarcreekfilm.com/>

There are many places where companies or the government or even just wars have destroyed the land. There are also areas where the poor, the disenfranchised, and the voiceless don't get any part of the stick—not even the short end. Tar Creek is an unknown place where the environmental problems and human tragedy are tightly connected. Tar Creek just happens to be our nation's worst environmental problem, and the worst part is that THERE ISN'T JUST ONE PROBLEM.

History

THE TRI-STATE MINING DISTRICT OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA was home to one of the largest ore strikes on the planet. These were lead and zinc deposits that produced 35% of ALL metals worldwide during the 1920s. TRI-STATE LEAD WAS USED TO MAKE ALL THE BULLETS FOR BOTH WORLD WARS. These legendary lead mines are the catalyst for all subsequent environmental and human concerns.

Superfund

Tar Creek was named a Superfund Site—which are government controlled environmental sites—in 1983, and it was considered the WORST SUPERFUND SITE IN THE COUNTRY. It was so named for of the water quality because from the time the mines were closed (1970) through 1979, these enormous mines were filling with water. More importantly, this water was oxidizing with the metals in the mines and creating sulfuric acid. This acid mine water surfaced into Tar Creek as an orange sign of the apocalypse and killed all the aquatic life in Tar Creek—the namesake of the Superfund Site. This marked the beginning of all the problems in the Tar Creek Area.

The Children

The ostensible government cleanup began after eight years of study, and during this time the Ottawa County Health Department discovered that 43% OF CHILDREN IN THE MINING COMMUNITIES HAD LEAD POISONING. This was caused by the 75 million tons of lead waste rock that still remain on the surface in mountains throughout these towns. These piles—called chat—have been used as playgrounds, as weekend cookouts, and as campgrounds since being drug from the mines. While 43% of children tested in 1996 showed blood leads, people have been here for six generations, wondering what is wrong, where the intellectual wall came from and who built it, and why learning is so difficult and diabetes so high. The acknowledged problems of now are the very same as the disguised, head-scratching problems of the 1920s.

The Quapaw

The landscape in Ottawa County has forever been freckled by the mine waste, and the reason the waste still remains is because the government made the mining companies leave it. This land is QUAPAW INDIAN LAND. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), who manages the Quapaw land, leased their property to the mining companies. The BIA knew back in the 1930s that this waste could cause health problems. THEY DIDN'T TELL THE CITIZENS. They didn't even move the citizens, but they feared that if this waste rock were moved and put somewhere else, that "somewhere else" might become a Superfund Site and they would be held liable. So the government determined that these people were going to be the ones to bleed because of this waste. THEY WERE PLAYING GOD WITH THESE PEOPLE.

Yet the Quapaw are left with land that is contaminated and covered with mine waste to the point where their land is useless. The waste can't be sold and the land can't be used. THIS LAND AND THE PEOPLE LIVING ON IT HAVE BEEN CONDEMNED TO THIS AWFUL FATE BY THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT.

Jim Inhofe

Through all the attempted cleanup efforts (totaling north of \$200 million), the lead poisoning rate, the contamination of the aquifer, the danger to children and families, talks of a federal buyout of homes were always quickly vanquished by JIM INHOFE, Oklahoma's Sr. Senator who chaired the Senate's Environment & Public Works Committee. Inhofe saw all of these problems and not only would he not help these citizens, he wouldn't even visit the area.

Instead, Inhofe devises a plan for more cleanup that would cost more and take longer than moving citizens to a better environment. INHOFE HAD THE POWER TO HELP THE CITIZENS IN HIS STATE, but for some strange reason he kept them in this place where property values are zero, and citizens leaving on their own, impossible.

Sinkholes

A lucky/unlucky thing happened. The mines, which had been steadily collapsing since they closed, began collapsing more frequently. SINKHOLES CROPPED UP LIKE A SCENE FROM A SCIENCE FICTION FILM. With this imminent risk and study to verify, finally A FEDERAL BUYOUT OF HOMES COULD NO LONGER BE IGNORED.

The Buyout

This is where science fiction returns to tragedy. There wasn't enough money secured to give citizens a fair value for their homes. Citizens pointed out the INCONSISTENCIES IN APPRAISALS, the low values, and the limited oversight in the process. The complaints were not met with concern or compassion, while Kelli Powers and her husband have to stay because they weren't offered enough to replace what they had. Bob Hatfield's wife had to come out of retirement to be able to leave, and 84-years-young Jackie Bresee was offered \$22,000 for her home. What can you buy on that?

Brass Tacks

Eventually this town will be put to rest, and these citizens—those who could afford to—will be gone. 100 years after ore was discovered, we're handing this land back to the Quapaw. They leased their land for mining, and they're getting back the worst Superfund Site in the country. THIS IS ALL THE LAND THE QUAPAW ARE GOING TO GET. AND IT'S RUINED.

Environmental problems are human problems. Tar Creek tells the story of all the problems that affect this area of America's Heartland and our country's oldest and worst environmental disaster. This might be the only place in the nation that LOOKS LIKE A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY. And it's been kept this way on purpose.

Matt Myers

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