

Film fest to focus on preserving Sauk County's natural resources

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Tammy Ritzman, of Waukesha, listens as Devil's Lake State Park naturalist Sue Johansen talks about the area's geology in October 2018 during a hike on the East Bluff Trail. A November film festival will examine the area's conservation efforts and challenges.

NEWS REPUBLIC ARCHIVES

The first Conserve Sauk Film Festival looks to educate attendees this fall about preserving the natural land and resources throughout the county through amateur films on the topic.

"We're hoping to bring light to environmental and conservation challenges that we're seeing not only in Sauk County, but across the area," said Justine Bula, education coordinator for Sauk County Land Resources and Environment. "With conservation, it's one of those things that can be daunting. So we want to celebrate what has been accomplished, because Sauk County is a phenomenal place."

Films for the free Nov. 9 event at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County can be submitted for a contest to be judged by a panel with backgrounds in conservation or filmmaking. The finalists will be shown during the festival, and will be

awarded for content and creativity. Attendees will be able to take place in the judging process by choosing a film to win the Fan Favorite award.

"We want the participants to be voting as well," said Bula. "We'd love to get some feedback."

The films will be judged on whether they covered a topic or posed a question relating to environmental challenges, conservation challenges or covered a piece of Sauk County history. Judges will consider if the posed question was answered or a solution was given. Films also will be judged on cinematic and creative qualities.

Submissions will be accepted until Aug. 16, and can be submitted on FilmFreeway.com for consideration.

Film submissions are not limited to residents of Sauk County, or Wisconsin. Jason Schulte, student life and activities director at UW-Baraboo said they have one film submitted from Kansas City, Kansas. The university donated the venue for the event.

"One of the films being presented is coming all the way from Kansas City," said Schulte. "So it's getting national if not world-wide recognition."

In addition to the amateur feature films, viewings of documentaries that pertain to Sauk County or the general topics of focus for the festival will be offered. These documentaries include "Green Fire: Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic and Our Future" and "Decoding the Driftless" along with "Journey of the Whooping Crane" and "Farmers Footprint."

"We want to highlight some things that we might sometimes look over, in the day to day," said Bula. "Just because we do live here and sometimes we forget how beautiful it is. We're hoping this helps connect the community."

The festival also will include discussions led by experts and educators following each film.

Although still in the planning phase, planners hope to feature products from local food vendors, wineries and breweries.

The event will be put on through a partnership between the Sauk County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department; Baraboo Public Library; Sauk County Conservation Network; and the Aldo Leopold Foundation, in addition to other local conservation groups.

Funding was provided in part from a grant from the UW-Extension, Arts and Culture Committee as well as Wisconsin Arts Board, with funding from the State of Wisconsin and National Endowment for the Arts, according to the festival website.

www.wiscnews.com/baraboonewsrepublic/news/local/film-fest-to-focus-on-preserving-sauk-county-s-natural/article_abfd71a6-0c8b-5756-a913-f5c3526406ad.html