

SER
2025
DENVER
UNITED STATES

Film Festival

A film festival that tells the stories of ecological restoration around the globe, exploring relationships between people, science, restoration and the environment

Directed by Jillianne Segura and Sharif Durzi

Program

Starting at 6:30 pm

Honourable mentions

Red Wolf in Time Out

The Bison Cultural Project in Mîî Rhpa Mâkoche or Banff
National Park

Starting at 6:50pm

Official proceedings

Introduction & Special Guest Speaker– Ava Hamilton

Healing Rangelands: A Story of Hope and Harmony in Northern
Kenya

Ostrea edulis - The Resilience of the European Native Flat Oyster
Plaatsriver

Bringing the Salmon Home: The Restoration of the Klamath River

Intermission (5 minutes)

Enraizados (Our Roots Remain)

Restoring a River: Tawatinaw Watershed's History & Future

SEAWEED, A Love Story

Pedder - The Fault in Tasmanias Wilderness

Thank you

Directors Statement

Welcome to the second Film Festival for SER's World Conference on Ecological Restoration. Sharif and I are so excited to share with you this year's line-up of outstanding films. This year's competition was fierce with many quality films and important stories to be told.



This film festival was born out of a desire to tap into the power of storytelling to build stronger and wider connections between the work being done and communities around the world in a medium that is powerful in its ability to evoke emotion, but also more approachable to a non-scientific audience.

We wanted the film festival to be inclusive, hence why the SER2023 Film Festival had a category dedicated to students and ecological restoration practitioners, in addition to the open and professional film-makers categories. With the SER2025 Film Festival we expanded our categories to include Weaving in Indigenous Perspectives to highlight the importance of combining traditional ecological knowledges with contemporary restoration approaches for optimal ecological outcomes and re-establishing connection of people to place.

Restoration is a global effort, and so was this film festival. Sharif and I are on opposite sides of the world, coordinating with people from all over this planet, building connections to tell these stories of ecological restoration.

Tonight's program will take you on a journey from Kenya to France, South Africa to the USA, Mexico and Canada, then New Zealand and finishing where this film festival began – Australia!

This film festival celebrates the success of small to landscape scale restoration and provides hope in an uncertain future. The screening tonight will finish with Pedder – The Fault in Tasmania's Wilderness, which unlike the others, is not a film about the success or progress of any ecological restoration project but about the fight and hope for one to come and to reconnect people with place.

We hope you enjoy the curated selection of films tonight, and don't forget to vote for the People's Choice award at the end of the night.

Warmest regards,

Your SER2025 Film Festival Co-Directors

Jillianne Segura and Sharif Durzi





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Introducing: Weaving in Indigenous Perspectives

This year, the film festival proudly introduces a new category: Weaving in Indigenous Perspectives. This category was inspired by conversations with cultural communicator Ryan Deneault (Skeetchestn First Nation) and Cultural Committee Co-Chair Natalie Tashe. The category explores the cultural, spiritual, and ecological importance of Indigenous knowledge in restoration. It offers both inspiration and guidance for filmmakers, providing a meaningful lens on the connections between Indigenous communities and ecological restoration.

Watch the [Thematic Feature](#) introducing the category or [explore the conversation](#) with Film Festival Co-Directors Jillianne Segura and Sharif Durzi, Ryan and Natalie where they discuss how Indigenous knowledge can shape stronger restoration outcomes and how storytelling, including filmmaking, can help bridge gaps between practitioners, communities, and non-scientific audiences.

Honourable mention:

The Bison Cultural Project in Mînh Rhpa Mâkoche or Banff National Park

This short documentary showcases an innovative research project which focuses on the restoration of Plains Bison to the mountain landscapes of Mînh Rhpa Mâkoche, also known as Banff National Park.

The Bison Cultural Research Project, led by William Snow, Acting Director of Stoney Consultation at Stoney Tribal Administration, brings together Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western science to redefine a more holistic approach to conservation and land management. The film serves as a tool to raise awareness about this unique collaboration between the Stoney Nakoda First Nation and Parks Canada and its significance in promoting Indigenous cultural heritage and ecological sustainability.





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Weaving in Indigenous Perspectives

Enraizados (Our roots remain)

In the mountains of Michoacán, Mexico, the Indigenous town of Cherán did what no one thought possible: it kicked out the cartels, shut down illegal logging, and took back control of its future.

“Enraizados” (Our Roots Remain) follows the community’s transformation from uprising to self-rule through the lives of three generations shaped by the

movement. Susy, a teenage street artist, turns local memory into public art. Paco, an environmental engineer, works to restore the land while building systems independent of the state. And Geno, one of the rebellion’s first organizers, looks back on the cost of standing up, and what it takes to keep going.



Director Biography: Ivonne Serna is a Mexican documentary filmmaker and climate specialist whose work elevates women and underrepresented communities through powerful environmental storytelling across Latin America, North America, and Europe. Sélim Benzeghia is a Franco-Algerian director and producer whose documentaries on climate justice, human rights, and migration have earned critical acclaim and driven policy impact across Europe.



Judge’s comment:

“Wow. What an incredibly impactful film. This one was very hard hitting and showcased some great community-led restoration work”

Learn more:

<https://www.redfordcenter.org/films/enraizados/>





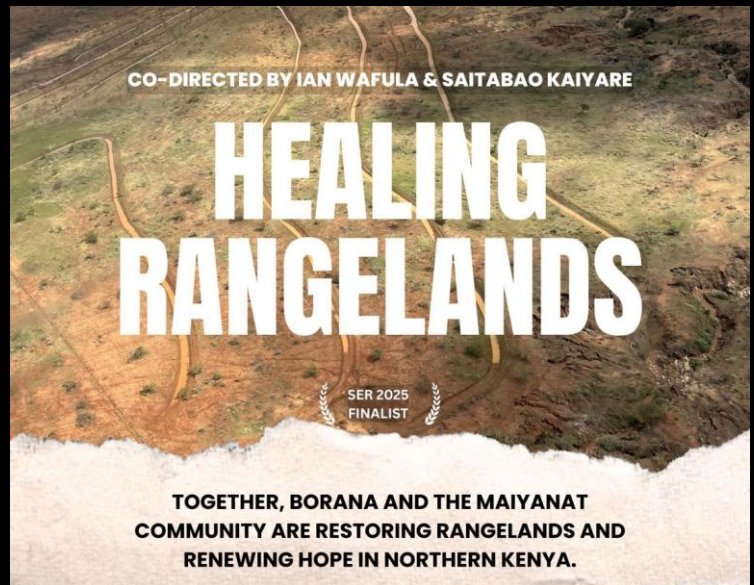
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Weaving in Indigenous Perspectives

Healing Rangelands: A Story of Hope and Harmony in Northern Kenya

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of Laikipia County's rugged landscapes, Healing Rangelands is a powerful documentary that chronicles the transformative partnership between Borana Conservancy and the Maiyanat community, led by the resilient and visionary Bernadette Tinkoi. Historically marred by conflict over land use and resource access,

the relationship between local communities and conservancies in Northern Kenya is being redefined—through a groundbreaking model of shared stewardship, ecological regeneration, and cultural collaboration.



Director Biography: Ian Wafula is a Nairobi-based filmmaker and storyteller whose work blends investigative journalism and civic dialogue to spotlight human-centered narratives across Kenya and beyond.

Saitabao Kaiyare is an award-winning filmmaker from Kilifi, Kenya, with over a decade of experience reimaging African narratives through documentary storytelling.

Judge's comment:

"This work has the greatest synchrony of cinematography and script from all the submissions I had to score, truly amazing..."

Learn more: <https://www.boranaconservancy.com/>





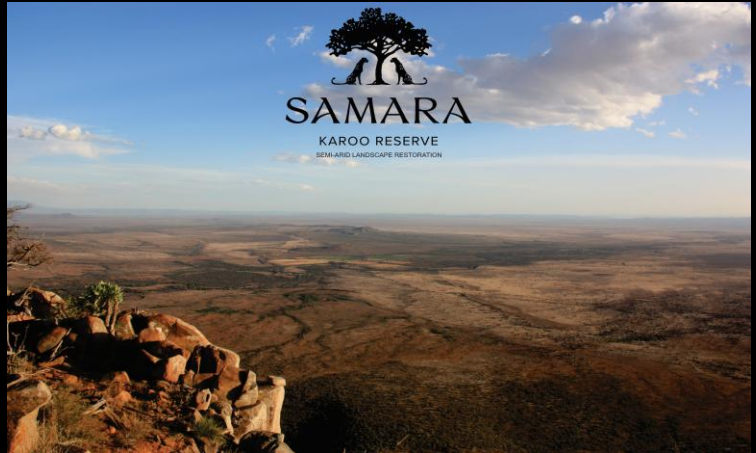
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Student and Ecological Restoration Professionals

Plaatsriver

The film documents the remarkable story of the Plaatsriver Restoration Project at Samara Karoo Reserve in South Africa. It serves as a powerful visual narrative of a community's dedicated efforts to heal a degraded landscape and bring

life back to the barren earth. At its core, the film is a celebration of human-led conservation. It features poignant interviews with members of the local community who express immense pride and a sense of ownership over the project. Their personal stories underscore the film's central message: that this work is not just about the environment, but about empowering people and providing a sense of purpose.



Director Biography: Ewert Hauptfleisch is a South African filmmaker and professional field guide whose work combines conservation, community engagement, and visual storytelling. Drawing on his deep connection to the land Ewert's philosophy centers on human responsibility for habitat loss and the urgent need to empower communities in building a sustainable future.

Judge's comment:

"this film is truly more than the sum of its parts... Plaatsriver is brimming with personality...As this filmmaker develops technically, I hope they keep hold of their artistic voice, and trust their creative intuition. If this film is anything to go by, they have a great deal to offer the world as an artist and filmmaker."





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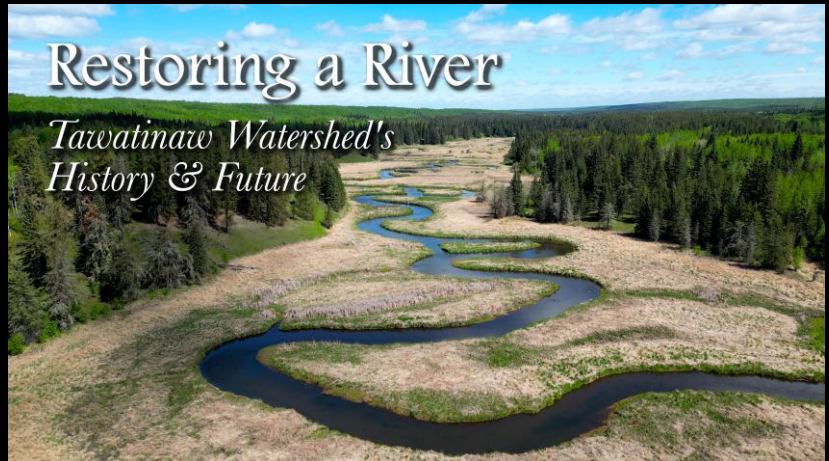
Student and Ecological Restoration Professionals

Restoring a River: Tawatinaw Watershed's History & Future

This short documentary showcases restoration justifications and efforts in the Tawatinaw Watershed, located in Alberta, Canada. It contains interviews from stakeholders across the watershed. This film was initially created as a volunteer effort to inspire further participation in environmental restoration efforts across the region.

Director Biography: Ethan Zapach is an Alberta-based filmmaker with a special passion for environmental projects. He currently works with several environmental organizations, including the

Athabasca Watershed Council, Crooked Creek Conservation Society of Athabasca, the Tawatinaw Watershed Working Group, and as a Director-at-Large for the Alberta Mycological Society. Through film, Ethan aims to make complex environmental issues and projects more accessible, highlighting the connections between people and the planet



Judge's comment:

"The film has a good feel and cadence to it... We are drawn into the story and it's variety of characters. There is a strong story on restoring the ecosystem to return to recreational activities of years past."





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Open Category and Professional Filmmakers - Short

Bringing the Salmon Home: The Restoration of the Klamath River

This film tells the story of the restoration of the Klamath River following the removal of four dams in 2024, a massive undertaking aimed at saving endangered salmon and other species. The film features dramatic imagery and includes perspectives from the project manager, as well as the tribal partners involved in revegetating the former reservoir footprints and enhancing habitats for the returning fish.



Director Biography: Shane Anderson, a two-time Emmy-winning documentary director and producer, specializes in exploring the intricate relationship between humans and nature, with a strong emphasis on wild salmon conservation and restoring ecological balance in the American West.



Judge's comment:

"Amazing to see such a large-scale piece of restoration. The science was clearly explained and the importance to indigenous communities included. A feel good and enjoyable film"

Learn more:

<https://bringthesalmonhome.org/>





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Open Category and Professional Filmmakers - Short

SEAWEED, A Love Story



Marine ecologist Dr. Nicole Miller dives Wellington's 70-kilometre coastline to assess the health of Giant Kelp Forests, revealing the urgent need to restore these vital underwater ecosystems threatened by kina barrens and climate change. Through Nicole's lens, we don't just see algae and seaweed—we witness an entire ecosystem holding on, still full

of beauty and possibility. Her work reveals a living coastline, woven with stories of change, loss, and hope. Through her journey, the film highlights the power of science, art, and storytelling in driving marine conservation and ecological recovery.

Director Biography: Rebecca J Pratt's work as a director and producer spans both international platforms—such as Netflix, the United Nations International Seabed Authority, and YouTube—and grassroots initiatives including Manta Watch New Zealand, Project Reef



Taranaki, and Explore Your Coast. After earning her Master of Communication Studies, she founded Salty Slate Productions to follow her passion for telling stories about remarkable people working to protect life beneath the waves.



Judge's comment:

"...this film does an exceptional job of showing what we had, what we are losing, why it's important, and what will be lost if we fail to value seaweed and the ecologies it supports"

Learn more: <https://exploreyourcoast.co.nz/>



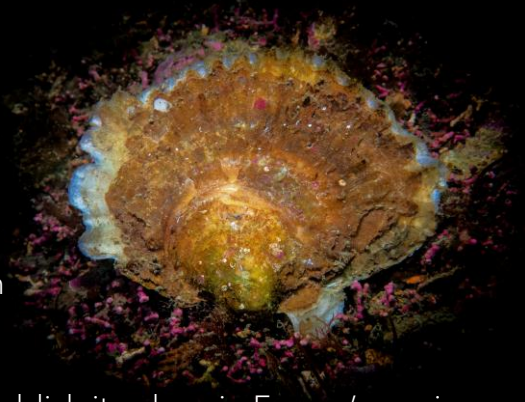


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Open Category and Professional Filmmakers - Feature

Ostrea edulis – The Resilience of the European Native Flat Oyster

In France, 99% of consumed oysters are Pacific oysters, a species introduced only 50 years ago to replace the once-abundant native European flat oyster. Once harvested directly from the wild, flat oysters became functionally extinct due to overharvesting and disease, prompting the invention of oyster farming in the 1850s. Today, scientists and oyster farmers are working to restore this precious species, aiming to revive its ecological role and reestablish its place in France's marine ecosystems.



Director Biography: Chloé Ledoux is a writer-director and trained geographer whose documentaries focus on ecology and the natural world, using an intimate, observational style to explore themes of sustainable development.



Nicolas Brikké is a cinematographer and director with a background in geophysics, known for his visually compelling documentaries on sustainable development, often enhanced by his expertise in drone cinematography.

Judge's comment:

"A beautiful production that describes an enormous effort to restore an oyster species."





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Open Category and Professional Filmmakers - Feature

Pedder: The fault in Tasmania's wilderness, is a story of restoring hope.

In 1972 the real Lake Pedder, a global wonder of equal spiritual significance as the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru, was flooded to create an auxiliary Hydro storage impoundment. The controversy generated world wide outcry, creating the conservation movement and Green values politics.

50 years later, the campaign to restore Lake Pedder has resurfaced, as the dams are deemed high risk having been constructed on a fault line.

Featuring Bob Brown, Tabatha Badger, Christine Milne, Rima Truchanas, Prof. Jamie Kirkpatrick, Dr. Kevin Kiernan, Jimmy Cordwell, Julie Gough & Tobias Burrows.



Director Biography: Tabatha Badger MP, MHA for Lyons, is a Tasmanian bushwalker, activist, and wilderness photographer who made a film to assist the Lake Pedder campaign.

Judge's comment:
"Powerful human driven story"

Learn more: <https://lakepedder.org/>



Thank you!

Thank you to our Final Panel

Enzo Martinelli

SER Board Member - Student and Emerging Professionals Director

Enzo Martelli is a Ph.D. student at the University of Montana. His research spans ecological monitoring and restorative silvicultural treatments, to the ecology of subalpine forests from the Andes of Chile to the Rocky Mountains of western North America. Enzo has been involved with SER at different instances and levels since 2018, participating in regional meetings as well as diverse in-person and virtual activities related to the world of ecological restoration. His current research and civic engagement activities are directed to the contribution of scientific-based evidence for the conservation and restoration of Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) and help build supportive communities for students and emerging professionals developing careers in ecological restoration. He strives to improve the ways students and emerging professionals can engage with, support, and enhance the value of their membership and future careers.

Luiz Moraes

SER Board Member – Vice Chair and Latin America/Caribbean Director

Luiz is an agronomist who has worked both as a practitioner and a researcher in ecological restoration over the last 25 years. His current work with Embrapa, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, focuses on ecological restoration in agricultural landscapes. Particularly interested in the power of connectivity and networking, Luiz has been involved with the Brazilian Network for Ecological Restoration (REBRE) since it began ten years ago. The exchange of diverse experiences and knowledge of restorationists worldwide is essential for the field of restoration ecology.

Manu Weidlich

SER Board Member

Emanuela W. A. Weidlich is a biologist with a master's in forestry engineering, and a PhD in Natural Sciences, and has more than 10 years of experience in applied plant ecology and restoration ecology, in both, tropical and temperate ecosystems. Her professional records involve research and teaching experience in Brazil (where she is from), England, USA, and Germany. Currently she is a research associate at Leuphana University in Germany and continues to collaborate with scientists in Brazil, in Atlantic Forest restoration projects. She also acts as associate editor of the Restoration Ecology journal published by SER and the Journal of Applied Ecology published by the British Ecological Society.

Thank you to our Final Panel continued...

Excellence Akeredolu

SER Board Member - SER Director at Large and Regional Director for West Africa and on the board of SER Africa.

Excellence Akeredolu is an Associate Professor of Zoology at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He holds a PhD from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and a Graduate Certificate in Endangered Species Management from the University of Kent, United Kingdom. His passions lie in wetland restoration, resource conservation, endangered species management, and contributing to a deeper understanding of wetland ecology and conservation strategies. Committed to wetland education, he engages with students through outreach programs, inspiring the next generation of scientists and conservationists. He actively participates in community projects, advocates for wetland conservation, and collaborates with like-minded individuals to protect endangered species. Additionally, he serves as a SER Director at Large and Regional Director for West Africa on the board of SER Africa. Notably, Excellence pioneered the creation of the first SER student chapter in Africa at the University of Lagos.

Jordi Cortina

SER Board Member – Europe

Jordi is a full professor at University of Alicante (Spain) and Chair of the European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration. Jordi received his Masters and PhD degrees in Biology from University of Barcelona, and he conducted postdoctoral studies at Colorado State University. Jordi has been a visiting researcher in New Zealand, Sweden, Scotland, Northern Arizona, Colombia, and Costa Rica. He has been involved in many aspects of ecological restoration including species selection, seedling production, site preparation, use of interspecific interactions, participatory processes, and systematic planning. In these areas he has collaborated with public and private practitioners. He has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in ecological restoration for +20 years and coordinated the University of Alicante M.Sc. program on Restoration and Management of Natural Environments.

David L Peterson

Professor of Forest Ecology University of Washington, USA

David is a Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences in Seattle, Washington. His research is focused primarily on climate change science, fire science, and various applications of science in natural resource management. David currently works with the Adaptation Partners team to develop climate change vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies in national forests and other federal lands throughout the western United States.

Thank you to our Final Panel continued...

Ryan Deneault

Founder and CEO of Healing Between Worlds, Canada

“32 years of being a functioning addict.

49 years of trying to fit into society.

A lifelong struggle to understand the inner battle of being both an Indigenous and a British settler in Canada, Ryan Deneault's upbringing was a constant battle of not fitting in.

As a mixed-race individual, Ryan never felt at home in either of the worlds he straddled. Today, Ryan's unique journey is the foundation for Healing Between Worlds. Through lived experience, Ryan shares his unique story to help others find their healing path, teaching about Canada's history, Truth and Reconciliation, the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and about journeying through addiction to wellness and recovery...

Healing Between Worlds nurtures healing, connection, and understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada.”

Taken from: <https://www.healingbetweenworlds.ca/meet-ryan>

Abby Dunn

Lecturer in Digital Media Storytelling, Charles Darwin University, and Freelance Director and Videographer

Abby Dunn is a lecturer at Charles Darwin University, specialising in Digital Media Storytelling. Abby is also a freelance Film Director and Videographer and is a volunteer advisory committee member for the Darwin Arts and Cultural Development Advisory Committee, contributing to initiatives that enrich the Darwin community, support local talent and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of Darwin and beyond.

Thank you to our judges

Tony Ballard – Meeting and Education Manager, SER

Marina Best – Associate Director, SER

Natalie Tashe – Co-Chair SER2025 Cultural Committee of the Local Organising Committee and Founder of ecoTASH
Miranda Ruekert - Membership and Marketing Associate, SER

Tyler Ellison – Owner and Creative Director of Wylde Wolfe Creative

Jack Hatajik - Student member of SER, an Emerging Professional Board Member of SER-Northeast Regional Chapter, and co-lead for the Environmental Film Festival at Yale

Thank you to our pre-screeners

Megan Stevenson

Isabelle Wheeler

Savannah Thomas

Abha Panda

Caleb Barville

Brian Scott

Pere - Godspower Toikumo

Alexander David Leslie

Rekha Dolas

Zara Boshier

Kate May

Scott Brian

Rohit Balay

Megan Hansen

Thank you to the SER2025 Film Festival committee

Elan Alford – Manager of Plant Conservation Science, Mt Cuba Center biography

Regina Wandler – Special Project Manager at King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Rory Cunningham – Independent film maker

Last but not least, a huge thank you to SER and SWCA for sponsoring the film festival, without their support, this would not have been possible.