



DCEFF[®]

Festival Report

9k Attendees

86 Films

20 Venues

March 19-28, 2026

2026 Festival Overview

With the theme ***Against the Current***, our 34th Annual Environmental Film Festival amplified the unwavering voices of those who press on in defense of our planet even in the face of significant challenges. Over the course of 10 days, our 55 programs (50% of them FREE) brought over 9,000 audience members to 20 different venues throughout the DC metro area.

In addition to dozens of premiere film events, this year's DCEFF featured enlightening conversations with filmmakers, journalists, activists, and scientists about environmental storytelling and its power to drive action on important issues at home and globally.



*Harnessing the power of film **and community** to illuminate, celebrate, and inspire positive and lasting action for our planet.*

Emphasizing Action



A hallmark of DCEFF's programming has always been our robust panels and Q&As. Featuring filmmakers, journalists, scientists, and emerging activists like Xiye Bastida (TIME100 Next Honoree), these conversations used our 2026 theme as a springboard to discuss how audiences can get involved and make a difference on pressing environmental issues.



35

Environmental Organizations

Among this year's special guests were representatives from prominent environmental organizations like the Jane Goodall Institute, National Resources Defense Council, Audubon Society, and Defenders of Wildlife. When programs ended, our audience could also interact with tabling organizations like Third Act, Women's Aquatic Network, World Wildlife Fund, Surfrider Foundation, Springsong Museum, and more.

37

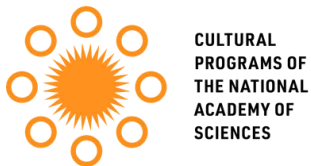
Post-Screening Discussions



Impactful Partnerships



DCEFF is fortunate to be able to co-present many of our programs with a diverse roster of partners doing important work here in the nation's capital and around the world.



Partner Program Highlights

Solwara: Papua New Guinea's Sacred Sea

The team from National Geographic Pristine Seas premiered their new feature film and discussed the impact of their work protecting marine biodiversity.

Presented by National Geographic's Pristine Seas



The Birds & Wild Hope: Building for Birds

This special double-feature was followed by a panel featuring Audubon Society CEO Dr. Elizabeth Gray and members of Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute.

Presented by HHMI Tangled Bank Studios



CivicEarth Media Forum

DCEFF's inaugural Media Forum featured two panel conversations with award-winning journalists: *Film & Video As a Tool for Impact in Journalism and Reporting On Science & the Environment from DC in 2026.*

With Support from Grist, Mongabay, Uproot Project, Society of Environmental Journalists & Double Exposure Investigative Film Festival

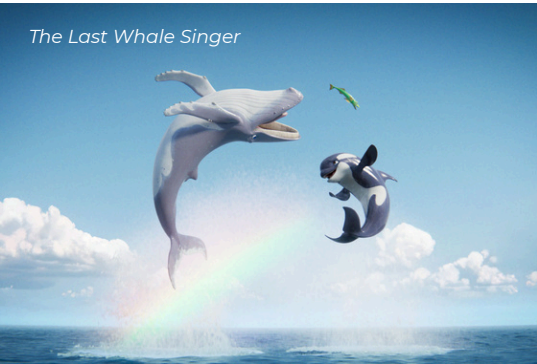


A Commitment to the Arts

While environmental storytelling is most often associated with science, policy, and advocacy, uplifting artists and their craft remains central to DCEFF's mission. This year's Festival celebrated the full breadth of cinematic expression — spanning diverse genres, internationally renowned auteurs, and exciting emerging voices — presenting work that stands alongside anything offered at the world's most prominent film showcases.



The Last Whale Singer



Observer



My Name is Oil



Highlights include: the DC Premieres of Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *Nuisance Bear* and the animated feature *The Last Whale Singer*, a showcase of experimental and narrative Eco-Horror Shorts, a co-presentation with the One World Film Festival, and a powerful live performance from Hasan Davis as York, a member of Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery.

Nuisance Bear



Flatatstic



55

Participating
Filmmakers

\$30k

Filmmaker
Awards

Praise for DCEFF



One of my favorite film festivals! They managed to pack all the theaters, which for a filmmaker means a lot! Great communication and friendly staff. Top organization!

-- Ignacio Walker, Filmmaker



I think and believe this Film Festival, for many reasons, is one of the most important film festivals we have in this country and in the world. We must support this Festival...you have become the first responders here in DC to tell our stories.

-- Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Hip Hop Caucus



We had a terrific time screening *Nuisance Bear* at DCEFF. The audience was so engaged and moderator Dana Hedgpeth really elevated the conversation. It was truly one of the best screenings we've had. Thank you for such a memorable experience!

-- Gabriela Osio Vanden & Jack Weisman, Filmmakers



Being selected for the Emerging Filmmakers Showcase was such an honor. Thank you to DCEFF for an incredibly memorable event and for the care they've put into creating a space for environmental storytellers.

-- Brynne Rardin, Filmmaker

Special Thanks



Presenting Sponsor

Shared Earth Foundation

Producer

Elva and Lawrence O'Brien Family Trust
Farvue Foundation
Lucas Kaempfer Foundation
Bill & Jane Stetson
Gwyn Whittaker

Partner

Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation
DC Commission On the Arts & Humanities
Wallace Genetic Foundation
Prince Charitable Trusts

Benefactor

Catalyst Foundation
DC Office of Cable Television, Film,
Music, & Entertainment
HHMI Tangled Bank Studios
Joseph W. Kaempfer Jr.
Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
National Geographic Pristine Seas
Trust for Mutual Understanding
Xylem

Media Partners

Grist
Mongabay
Planet Forward
Pulitzer Center

100+

Volunteers

700+

Volunteer Hours
Contributed

Additional Thanks



DCEFF Board of Directors

Annie Kaempfer, Chair

E. William Stetson III, Vice Chair

Shelley Cohen, Secretary

Peter O'Brien, Treasurer

Theo Adamstein

Mustafa Santiago Ali

Caroline Gabel

Grace Guggenheim

Selina Holmes

Greg McGruder

Tyrhee Moore

Peggy Parsons

Nora Pouillon

Kristin Rechberger

Jacob Scherr

Flo Stone

Gwyn Whittaker

Margie Burks

Katie Carpenter

Wendy Catbagan

Harriett Crosby

Maggie Dewane

Diana Lady Dougan

Sarah duPont

Barbara L. Franklin

Laurence Hausman

Anna Hedlund

Jennifer Johnson

Holly Jonas

Sarah Keo

Helen McNeill

Alex Moe

Sara Murray

Hunter Nolan

Maggie Stogner

Helen Strong

Maki Tazawa

Mary Wallace

Georgiana Warner

Advisory Council

Owen Davies, Chair

Campbell Howe, Vice Chair

Sylvia & Christopher Addison

Jessie Brinkley

Constance Bruce



Monica Schorn

Executive Director

Jacob Crawford

Director of Marketing & Ops

Brianna Rodriguez

Director of Development

Brad Forder

Director of Programming

Audrey Kellogg

Development Manager

Cate Latessa

Program Manager

Samantha Plakun

Senior Programmer

Megan Bohan

Administrative Assistant

Questions?

Info@dceff.org

Learn More & Stream

dceff.org

35th Anniversary Festival

April 8-17, 2027