

RIVERS OF RESILIENCE:
THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

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in

Science and Natural History Filmmaking

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DEDICATION

This film is dedicated to the fundamental goodness in each of us, and to those who seek to harness it for the betterment of the world.

“ And now that you don’t have to be perfect, you can be good.”

- John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

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ABSTRACT

Protect Our Rivers is a documentary film that chronicles the transformative journey of Sarah Nelson, a young woman who, after enduring profound personal losses, discovers her life's purpose in river conservation. Inspired by her first whitewater rafting trip, Sarah establishes the nonprofit organization Protect Our Rivers, which mobilizes volunteers to remove over 120,000 pounds of trash from local streams and restore the health of America's waterways. Through Sarah's story, the film explores themes of resilience, community, and the power of individual action in the face of environmental degradation and climate change.

The film captures Sarah's tireless dedication to river conservation, juxtaposing her personal journey of healing with the renewal of strained waterways. Set against the backdrop of the pristine Salmon River and the urban stretch of the South Platte River in Denver, Colorado, the film underscores the importance of preserving rivers as vital ecosystems and sources of community recreation and well-being. Despite facing extreme pollution and degradation, Sarah's grassroots efforts demonstrate the potential for small-scale actions to make a significant impact on river health and community empowerment.

Drawing stylistic inspiration from other verité-style environmental documentaries, stunning cinematography and immersive storytelling is embraced in the film to evoke emotional resonance and inspire collective action in its viewers. By highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental conservation and human well-being, the film serves as a poignant reminder of our shared responsibility to protect the planet's precious rivers. Through Sarah's story, *Protect Our Rivers* offers a beacon of hope and empowerment, demonstrating that one person's passion and dedication can create a ripple effect of positive change in the world.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

Filmmaker Bio

I am an MFA Candidate at Montana State University's Science and Natural History Filmmaking program. I seek to explore and capture the depths of the inner worlds of 'ordinary' people and places and examine the connection between humans and their surrounding environments. While primarily a documentarian who is passionate about telling socio-environmental stories, I explore essayistic experimental tactics of film within my Master's studies. I am an award-winning photographer and film director and most recently have had my work screened at Big Sky Documentary and Banff Mountain Film Festivals.

Filmmaker Artist Statement

I have been a visual artist since I was young, inspired by the vibrant art scene and mountainous environment of Boulder, Colorado, where I grew up. My father, a photographer, got my hands on a camera before I was able to read. Having worked in many visual mediums, image-making has always been closest to my heart. I spent years of young adulthood traveling and working as a visual journalist, where I realized how valuable adding the component of time and movement in my work was, and my compass shifted towards documentary film. Previously stifled by the boundaries of journalism in my undergraduate studies, while pursuing this degree I have been inspired by artists who push the boundaries of documentary to make something that is creative and artistic as well as informative. Ideally, I will continue to create work that aligns with this creative freedom, but in a more practical sense, I am closely intertwined with the outdoor industry in my work. As an avid outdoorswoman who grew up recreating in the Rocky

Mountains, I am a trusted content creator for many Colorado-based lifestyle and outdoor brands. My thesis work following my subject Sarah Nelson's river-based non-profit is reflective of my connections to the industry and my creative approach to illustrating the multifaceted stories of outdoor recreation culture and the environmental issues that surround it.

Film Logline

After a season of devastating loss, the granddaughter of a Glen Canyon Dam engineer finds her calling on her first river trip, leading to the creation of "Protect Our Rivers", a nonprofit that mobilized a nationwide movement to clean up over 120,000 pounds of trash from local streams and continues to revitalize America's waterways.

Film Synopsis

In the wake of unfathomable loss, Sarah Nelson, a 30-year-old woman, finds herself at a crossroads. Having lost her father to cancer, her job, and her beloved grandfather, she is at rock bottom, grappling with grief and searching for a sense of purpose. In the quiet depths of despair, she stumbles upon a path that will alter her life's course forever.

This short film is a cinematic portrayal of the resilience and dedication of Sarah, a remarkable figure known within the Colorado river community for her tireless dedication to conservation. The film seeks to capture Sarah's larger-than-life attitude that commands respect albeit a petite woman amidst a traditionally masculine industry. The film is structured to reflect on Sarah's very first river expedition that sparked the creation of her nonprofit and allowed her to grieve her father. The serene landscapes of the majestic Salmon River serve as

a powerful backdrop to her connection to rivers as we follow her story from act to act. We see Sarah finding inspiration on the river and then follow her tireless efforts in leading and organizing river clean-ups. Sarah's voice, drawn from emotional interviews, carries the film's narrative, and as viewers, we are taken on a journey through her trials, her joys, and her transformation. Sarah's story resonates as she uses her passion to draw the river community together to protect the places that they all find incredible joy. The film seeks to portray the magic that happens when humans and nature converge. Sarah's journey of healing and rediscovery unfolds alongside the renewal of trashed waterways and devastated rivers. The film charts the evolution of this grassroots movement, a testament to the extraordinary power of everyday people coming together to protect the lifeblood of our planet. The heartwarming camaraderie among volunteers and the powerful sense of community becomes the crux of the film, illustrating the strength of unity and determination. With over 120,000 pounds of trash removed from local streams, we witness the tangible impact of Sarah's mission. The film showcases the restoration of waterways, reminding us that every individual's actions contribute to a greater, collective good.

This film will rely on Sarah's voice to take us through many destinations on the water as we witness the differences between wild, protected rivers and trashed and toxic urban stretches of water through the Denver area. With carefully-crafted cinematography that attempts to do justice to the untamed beauty of the river, the wild landscapes and communal joy that it nurtures are emphasized as Sarah's inspiration to maintain clean waterways. As we hear the pain, the passion, and the determination in Sarah's voice, we are inspired to

contemplate our own capacity to make a difference. In a world grappling with environmental doom, the film offers a powerful message: we are all stakeholders in the protection of our planet's precious rivers, the lifeblood of our natural world. Although much smaller in scale and budget, the film seeks to be comparable to Patagonia's editing, storytelling methods, and cinematography in *Damnation*, as a poignant, visual ode to the resilience of the human spirit, the healing power of nature, and the indomitable force of community. This film will stand as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that one person, when inspired, can create a powerful ripple effect.

Financial Information

This film will be self-funded to begin with, with aspirations to raise money for the film's distribution in the Denver area through screening parties and similar events within the outdoor industry. Local brands such as NRS, Good River Beer Co., and Kokopelli Rafts have offered support in hosting screenings of the film in the Denver community once it is released.

Table 1: *Protect Our Rivers* Film Budget

DIRECTORS/PRODUCERS	In-kind
PRODUCTION STAFF	\$350.00
CAMERA	\$756.00
PRODUCTION SOUND	In-kind
TRAVEL & LIVING	\$450.00
SD CARDS, HARD DRIVES, STORAGE	\$1,200.00
EXPENDABLES	\$650.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$3,406.00

Crew

Lindsay Coe: Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Jaqueline Ratliff: Sound Recordist/Grip, Production support

Dr. Hugo Sindelar: Thesis Chair

Christina Z. Anderson: Thesis Committee Member

Tom Watson: Thesis Committee Member

Cynthia Stillwell: Program Director

Talent: Sarah and Chase Nelson, Drew Carlson, Carter Freericks, Preston and Emma Hartman,

Rob and Janie Smith, Scott Coe

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY, CONTEXT, AND ARTISTIC APPROACH

Section 2.1 Research

River Health, Plastic Pollution, and a Solution

The narrative trajectory of "Protect Our Rivers" is deeply entrenched in the ethos of human-led environmental activism, presenting a beacon of hope in an era where individual actions may seem inconsequential amidst larger systemic challenges. One of the many environmental challenges we face today is the rapid degradation of river health and cleanliness around the world. In the Western United States specifically, rivers and streams are crucial landscape components that provide countless ecosystem services, such as riparian habitat biodiversity, and drinking water for hundreds of millions of people (Wohl). Rivers are a key component of both environmental and anthropogenic global health overall. Anthropogenic pollution and urbanization have caused extreme decline in the health of American rivers as water quality and habitat abundance decline, causing extinction rates of freshwater species to increase at a faster rate than ever (Wohl). A 2021 studies confirmed that nearly 700 marine species are harmed specifically by plastic pollution in our waterways, of which over 100 are already deemed endangered. Plastic pollution alone is estimated to cost coastal communities over 9 billion USD each year. It's not merely that large, plastic objects are clogging the arteries of the environment, though. These plastics are teeming with toxic chemicals, which make their way into the seafood that provides the primary source of nutrients for over three billion people around the world. Many of these microplastics and garbage originate from litter in rivers and streams, and the amount of plastic in our rivers and oceans is expected to double over the next 7 years if a

change is not made (Slat). While governments around the world have attempted to enact better waste management strategies, the predicted growth in plastic pollution far outweighs the efforts that have been planned to mitigate plastic pollution (Borrelle et al.) These grim statistics mean small scale actions are potentially more crucial than ever. The 21st century effective altruism movement, which is defined as the “philosophical and social movement that advocates for using evidence and reason to figure out how to benefit others as much as possible, and taking action on that basis”, may shed light on how we can achieve the most rapid reduction in the amount of plastic flowing into our waterways. With the approach of effective altruism, analyses show that by focusing on a specified cause, you may increase your social impact nearly thousands of times simply through honing in on the most effective intervention (Slat). To protect our riparian species and their habitats, maintain healthy drinking water, and for rivers and streams to continue to provide their crucial ecosystem services, small scale action, like Sarah Nelson’s initiative of communal river cleanups, is of utmost importance in the modern day.

In Colorado specifically, the South Platte river plays a vital role in supporting Rocky Mountain and Front Range ecosystems, providing riparian habitats, water for irrigation, and serving as recreational hubs for local communities. However, industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and littered drainage are prominent in urban sections of the Lower South Platte that runs through Denver. A 2022 study by the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment found the South Platte River watershed — a stretch of river that Sarah’s work focuses specifically on restoring — is currently facing extreme waste pollution that is causing water quality degradation for the state and significant ecosystem disruption down river. Littering and illegal dumping contribute largely to this accumulation of pollution in the South Platte (United States EPA,

2013). Returning to the concept of effective altruism, data from a 2015 study supports the idea that seemingly small-scale actions, like removing garbage from one's local rivers and streams does make a notable impact when it comes to preventing debris from traveling thousands of miles to the coasts and causing ecosystem failure elsewhere (Jambeck et al.).

Despite being a central feature of the city's landscape, the Lower South Platte is one of the filthiest sections of water in the state of Colorado, and Denver's Department of Public Health announced in 2022 that it is facing its poorest health in recorded history. Cleaning up the urban stretch of the river not only aids the issues discussed above, but also offers a clean greenspace for Denver's urban population to recreate, which can offer immense health benefits, adding another layer of importance for the restoration of the river (Lee et al.). In response to these factors, Sarah has organized over 80 clean-ups of the South Platte alone over the last few years, which has engaged both community volunteers and Denver stakeholders in hands-on conservation efforts. Sarah's efforts have rippled thorough river communities of the Rocky Mountains, and Protect Our Rivers clean ups have been held in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, garnering over 10,000 clean up volunteers since its founding.

The 'Most Controversial Dam' in History

In great irony, Sarah Nelson's grandfather was the head economist for the Bureau of Reclamation during the construction of the highly controversial Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River, going down in history as one of the men who spearheaded the project. The Glen Canyon Dam was and still is a heated topic, and famously found itself the plot of Edward Abbey's most famous fiction book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which depicts a group of environmentalists whose one goal in life was to destroy the dam. The book gained great

popularity among environmentalists across the American West and fanned the flame of the heated debate over the project (Rott and Harbage). Abbey called the dam “an insult to God’s creation”, while the Bureau of Reclamation deemed it one of the greatest “engineering wonders of the world” (Rott and Harbage). While the initiative behind the construction of the dam was to generate electricity and provide a stable water supply for the fast-growing states of Arizona and New Mexico, the dam also stopped the flow of an iconic wild river that spans 260,000 square miles and flows through 11 national parks and monuments (American Rivers). It flooded a beautiful canyon that was chock-full of Native American history and destroyed the entirety of the ecosystems which existed below the reservoir as the canyon became filled with sediment and water (Beard).

As *Protect Our Rivers* is set against the backdrop of the American West, it peeks into the culture of river runners who raft in a region marked by both its iconic rivers and the confluence of environmental conservation efforts. Sarah is one of these people, and a huge part of this community, and does not shy away from talking about her grandfather’s involvement in the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam, which is unanimously despised by the river community (Gulliford and Thompson). The film illustrates the coincidental connection between Sarah’s family history and her passion for river protection in an empathetic way that avoids pointing fingers and ultimately exemplifies that great beauty can emerge from great destruction.

Section 2.2: Connection to the Broader Field

In understanding the modern-day relevance *Protect Our Rivers*, it's essential to contextualize the film within the specific threats that rivers in the Western United States are facing. As previously discussed, the health of Western rivers is an ever-pressing issue, with

human interference and pollution posing significant threats to ecosystem integrity and community well-being. Conversations in visual media about this relationship is not a novel one. The connection between our waterways and human impact is an obvious topic of concern, and many successful and impactful films which discuss this have come before the film I am creating. Films like Travis Rummel and Ben Knight's *Damnation* and Ben Masters' *5,000 Miles of Wild* provide insight into the ecological ramifications of human interference in Western rivers, while also spotlighting the resilience of individuals and communities in the face of environmental degradation. By showcasing the tangible impacts of grassroots organizing and community mobilization, these films underscore the transformative potential of collective action in preserving the natural heritage of the American West.

Many environmentally-focused documentary films have a proven track record of making significant political impact, catalyzing policy changes, and creating public support for environmental conservation efforts. Documentaries such as *An Inconvenient Truth* by Davis Guggenheim and *Before the Flood* by Fisher Stevens and Leonardo DiCaprio have played instrumental roles in creating buzz and awareness around consequences of climate change and in influencing governmental policies on environmental regulation and renewable energy. These films utilized powerful storytelling techniques and compelling narratives to engage audiences and stimulate discussions on pressing environmental issues. Similarly, *Gasland* directed by Josh Fox sheds light on the detrimental effects of hydraulic fracturing on water quality and public health, which sparked nationwide debates, outcry, and education, ultimately prompting legislative actions to regulate fracking practices in heavily impacted areas around the U.S. By examining the political impact of these previous environmental films, it becomes evident that

well-made environmental documentaries do truly have the power to mobilize public opinion, shape policy agendas, and drive positive change in environmental practices. The tangible impact that a documentary film may create has been studied by scholars such as political scientist David Whiteman, who found that successful documentaries increase the priority and pace of sociopolitical issues. On a smaller scale, given the more humble roots of this film, I intend for this story to make a positive impact by instilling the belief that each of us has the power to make true change with small steps on a day-to-day basis.

Stylistically, *Protect Our Rivers* draws inspiration from the immersive vérité-style documentary filmmaking employed in *Damnation* and *5,000 Miles of Wild*. Prioritizing authenticity and intimacy in its portrayal of Sarah's experiences, this film seeks to forge a deeper connection between viewers and the protagonist, amplifying the empowering emotional resonance of her story. Departing from conventional environmental documentaries, which often focus heavily on scientific data or policy advocacy, *Protect Our Rivers* takes a human-led approach, shining a spotlight on Sarah's journey from her family history involving the Glen Canyon Dam and devastating personal loss that ultimately led to effective environmental advocacy. Drawing parallels to concepts like voting in our democracy, where the collective power of individual actions is often underestimated, the film challenges the notion that one person's efforts are inconsequential by showcasing Sarah's journey of healing and discovery of the power of the individual. The film aspires to be viewed as a potent reminder of the ripple effects of individual actions, inspiring audiences to recognize their own capacity to make a difference in the world.

Section 2.3 Artistic Approach

This story will be told in a raw and vulnerable documentary-style, focusing on pristine cinematography which juxtaposes the serenity of wild, clean rivers like the Salmon River in Idaho with intensely polluted waterways like the South Platte River in Colorado. We will hear Sarah's voice from emotional interview recordings playing under footage of her river cleanups that capture both the sadness of the state of our rivers yet also a hopefulness as we see the spirit of river folk, young and old, from all walks of life, coming together to protect them. The visuals and audio will work simultaneously to create an emotional response from the viewer, ultimately working to convey a message of hope — a call to action to leave environmental nihilism behind and get involved with making change.

Stylistically speaking, I have been inspired for years by Patagonia's documentary *Damnation* due to its distinct cinematic style and emotionally evocative storytelling structure. *Damnation*, leverages montage editing techniques that create stunning juxtapositions cutting between serene landscapes and images of environmental degradation, which creates a poignant contrast that evokes a range of emotions from viewers. The film's immersive sound design which featuring crisp, ambient sounds of rushing water and wildlife, enhances the sensory experience, compelling viewers to reflect on the importance of protecting the serenity of these places. The film's visual aesthetic skillfully captures the beauty of untamed rivers and Western landscapes, evoking a sense of awe and reverence for the natural world, and a desire to protect it. This structure and the creative choices made by these filmmakers successfully emphasize the urgency of their message of environmental protection.

Damnation also within its compelling storytelling structure seamlessly interwove personal narratives, historical accounts, and environmental advocacy, which I am attempting to mirror in my work in order to humanize complex environmental issues and make them feel accessible and not impossible to tackle by the public. Patagonia's approach to their films often follow this initiative and have always resonated deeply with me as a storyteller, which is why I chose to focus on emphasizing Sarah's personal narrative to inspire empathy, provoke reflection, and spur action.

On a more abstract note, I found inspiration in J.P. Sniadecki's experimental documentary *El Mar La Mar*. The film makes use of fragmented imagery, ambient soundscapes, and visual metaphors/juxtapositions on screen that offer a more immersive experience, allowing viewers to engage with the subject matter on a visceral level. The filmmaker's decision to branch out from traditional narrative structures in *El Mar La Mar* demonstrated the potential to use experimental cinematic decisions to provoke deeper thought and emotion. As I shot and edited this film, I recalled Sniadecki's work to attempt to introduce a bit of a deeper and more visceral energy to this film. The film begins with a montage to introduce the story with irony and juxtaposition, making use of archival imagery of the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River. The film opens with visuals of unique and mind-boggling footage of the massive construction project, using shots that feel almost abstract to draw the viewer and make them inquire about what they are seeing. A montage with orchestral music and rushing water from the dam begins, cutting quickly between shots of the grandiosity of the project as a large steel beam decorated with a massive American

Flag is dropped into place as Native Americans play music for tourists atop the dam on opening day, and the montage almost seems to mock it. We see the completion of the dam and the music and sound effects cut out sharply, as the camera shows a long, peaceful shot of the stunning view of Glen Canyon before construction began. The shot is interrupted with an unnervingly loud explosion from the sandstone face as the viewer sits with this long take and hears it echo through the canyon. As the sounds of the explosion fade and the boulders crumble down into the river that was so peaceful just a few moments prior, I attempt to leverage the dramatic explosion by cutting the previous montage starkly to silence, allowing an emotional response to arise in the viewer. Through a quiet, then abrasive, soundscape paired with a dramatic shot of environmental destruction here as influenced by Sniadecki, the ironic message is clear, and further explanation becomes unnecessary. The multilayered levels of irony in this story are evident, but only powerful if set up cleverly. By incorporating these artistic influences in my film, I was able to make stronger decisions when it came to story structure, editing, sound, and color.

CHAPTER THREE: CONNECTION TO THE MATERIAL AND DISTRIBUTION

Section 3.1 Connection to the Material

In January 2023, I had the serendipitous opportunity to cross paths with Sarah Nelson, a name that I had been familiar with for a while through mutual connections in Denver's non-profit community. In just 30 minutes of talking with her over coffee, I became captivated by her compelling personal story that evolved into her grassroots efforts to unite river enthusiasts and care for the environment. Sarah's infectious commitment to river conservation and community connection left a lasting impression on me, confirming the descriptions I'd heard of her as a force to be reckoned with. Despite her impactful presence, Sarah's genuine humility assured me that she would make an excellent subject for a film. It was her genuine excitement for the prospect of sharing her organization's story, not a desire for personal spotlight, that inspired the idea to create a documentary, and she welcomed the idea.

We held many virtual meetings over the subsequent months, bridging the distance between Montana and Colorado, and solidified a fast friendship. As creative, exuberant, ADHD-ridden women working in the outdoor industry and navigating the culture of the Northern Rockies, we discovered a surprising number of commonalities. Recognizing my unique perspective as someone within the outdoor industry but outside the river community, I felt very equipped to convey Sarah's dedication and the challenges she faced, with a healthy level of curiosity about river culture. Our shared experiences fostered a sense of trust that helped Sarah feel safe sharing her emotional story on camera and allowed me to authentically capture how she motivates others to engage in river conservation. This evolution laid the foundation for a

powerful storytelling dynamic, which resulted in interviews that were honest, comfortable, and raw, allowing us to explore even the most difficult topics, such as the sudden death of her father that ultimately led her to starting her nonprofit organization. Both committed to maximizing our resources, we dedicated ourselves to telling Sarah's story authentically.

Within weeks of our acquaintance, Sarah extended an invitation for me to join and film Protect Our Rivers' annual board member river trip on the Salmon River in Idaho—a weeklong float through the most remote wilderness in the lower 48 states. Despite my initial apprehension about the logistics of filming in such a rugged environment and trusting her to navigate us through class IV rapids every day, I agreed to meet them in Idaho in September with all my camera gear. Little did I anticipate finding myself in the heart of the wilderness, helping my thesis film subject to wash her hair with biodegradable soap on a sandy beach, 60 miles downstream from the put-in and completely isolated, but there I was. The experience, although the most challenging shoot I have ever attempted, was immensely rewarding, and it strengthened my understanding for her passion and community. I was able to immerse myself in what a clean, healthy, and protected river looks like, and I understood deeply from where her desire to protect these places was rooted.

Today's era of endless climate change doom can be debilitating. No matter how much you love the outdoors, it can be easy to fall into a nihilistic trap of feeling like our small actions don't matter in the bigger picture. It seems so hard to convince ourselves that a drop in the ocean is going to make a difference, and Sarah strongly believes this is preventing collective change when it comes to caring for our planet. The intention behind Protect Our Rivers stems from this exact phenomenon in a beautiful and inspirational way. Sarah embodies the belief that today's

small actions will positively impact tomorrow which ultimately led her to a leap of faith to invest most of her life savings into starting an organization she hoped would create a ripple effect in the Denver community. As it turns out, it created a ripple effect across the entire U.S., and her efforts have meant that over 120,000 pounds of garbage have been removed from rivers and streams by volunteers from all walks of life, who come together with a common love for the infinite life-giving resources that rivers provide.

This story feels especially relevant at this time of ill-fated socio-environmental overwhelm, where oftentimes, if you are paying attention, the world feels hopeless. It seeks to illustrate that positive and resilient actions can create a snowball effect and foster real change. It is a story of hope, at a time where hope, especially when it comes to our Earth, feels unlikely. I hope it may serve as a call to action for outdoors folk and nature lovers alike to reframe their thinking about the small, feasible actions, we can all take to make the world a little bit better, actions that can one day yield immense change when the status quo shifts.

Section 3.2 Dissemination

I have spent extensive time planning and networking in the Denver outdoor community for the dissemination of the film. To maximize viewership and distribution for this film, it's essential to target a diverse range of audiences while taking advantage of Colorado's booming outdoor culture. First, I intend to shape the film in a way that naturally resonates with outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds, from hikers, to kayakers, to mountain bikers, extended to those who just feel passionate about nature and U.S. public lands. These types of people are likely to be drawn to the film's themes of environmental conservation and the transformative power of nature. Families and children alike will be another target audience as we will present the film in a

family-friendly format to promote excitement about rivers and community conservation.

Through the production of this film, I have created connections with many names in the Denver river community, some of which have offered to host strategic screening parties at their local businesses to generate buzz about the film in the beginning of its dissemination.

Additionally, I will consider reaching out to some of my contacts from the applied anthropology, journalism, and environmental science departments at my alma mater, the University of Colorado, in order to introduce the film to students and educators interested in environmental science and visual storytelling. Finally, through social media, I have encouraged engagement with and interest for this film before its release by posting teasers and reels on Instagram which have been successful. Once the film is finished, I will be strategically submitting it to film festivals that seek out environmental and outdoors-based stories, such as Banff Mountain, Boulder, and Big Sky Documentary Film Festivals.

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