

A CALL TO REWILD: A PERSONAL ESSAY FILM EXPLORING THE HUMAN
MOTIVATION TO PROTECT WILD PLACES

by

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

of

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in

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DEDICATION

To anyone who has ever been brought to tears by the beauty of a wild landscape and has trouble understanding why.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The original foundation of this project was based on one question: What motivates certain humans to care for the natural world? This question prompted many more questions along the thematic lines of human connection to the natural world and why that connection is so critical to our ability to survive and thrive as people. This film took on an essay or diary film form, using the filmmaker's voice as the narrative thread, dissecting and connecting various reflections of herself and the interview subjects along the way. There were other essay films that served as a source of inspiration for the structure of this film, primarily New York Times's Opinion Documentaries, an outlet for which this film may have an appropriate place. Ultimately, the intended purpose of this film and subsequent supporting paper is to inspire others to reflect on their own personal connection to special outdoor spaces and encourage the strengthening of the relationship between people and place.

PART ONE

Artist Statement

For the last 15 years of my career, my work has focused on engaging the public in natural resource conservation efforts. This has meant working for non-government, non-profit organizations in a communications and outreach capacity. At one point I was the youngest RIVERKEEPER© in the country, advocating for stronger enforcement of the Clean Water Act on my home waters in the Chesapeake Bay region. Currently, I lead a team of field organizers for Wild Montana, with the responsibility of building and mobilizing supporters to voice their concerns regarding the management and protection of public lands across the state.

For seven years, from 2014 to 2021, I worked for a national non-profit called American Rivers as a communications and outreach associate. During that tenure, I witnessed the power of storytelling to deliver important messages that inspired people to act for important causes. For this reason, I took a pause from this work to enter the Science and Natural History Filmmaking program at MSU. I believed that while a transition into filmmaking would prove to be a steep learning curve, it could be another powerful medium for storytelling to have in my environmental advocacy toolbox.

I am a “conservation storyteller”, who strives to find the stories of human experiences that inspire viewers to think about their personal relationships and care about the impacts they have on the natural world. After the experience with this program, I have a stronger knowledge of using film specifically to tell these stories in a way that inspires a viewer to speak out, voice support or take actions that protect the places they love.

Website and Portfolio

[This website](#) currently hosts a short bio, artist statement, and a portfolio that includes my thesis, and a selection of my work from the program. Each film includes a logline, synopsis, crew bios, and any screenings that may have occurred.

Film Freeway Page

<https://filmfreeway.com/KascieHerron>

PART TWO

Story of the film

Before I began the filming for *A Call to Rewild*, it had numerous iterations. Originally, I envisioned a story about the impacts of recreation and how humans are “loving their favorite places to death” using my favorite river system as the location of focus. Then the narrative evolved to include more of my personal voice and self-reflection of a place that has inspired me to protect it. Once I began interviewing the key subjects, it again evolved into a piece that explores a deeper, almost spiritual connection to the natural environment that I argue exists in all humans. While recognizing that many humans may never have a spiritual or emotional awakening amid natural grandeur, having such an experience often leaves a lasting impression. A spiritual experience is a strong motivator for many causes, just observe the power organized religion has had on human decision making. What if every human had the chance to feel such a stirring inside?

The final version of this story was produced through the process of interviewing, then spending time by myself to reflect and be immersed in the place that inspires me to do environmental protection work. Showing vulnerability by sharing my thoughts “out loud” is how I build trust and relationships with people in my personal and professional life, so I took a similar approach to connecting with audience. I did this by filming myself quite literally sitting and thinking, either by the river, in the back of my car, while drinking coffee or looking out across the landscape, or while taking notes. Footage was taken from the car while driving to and from interviews, or specific locations to be filmed. I transcribed my interviews, read them, read them again, and pulled out the most interesting or compelling thoughts and ideas. Then I’d transcribe

and whittle it down more. Ultimately, there was more than four hours of interviews to be edited in a 12-minute film.

The process took longer than intended—the story began as an observation of the impacts of recreation on river health and morphed into a love letter to a place that has shaped me as a conservation professional. I am fortunate that my interview subjects are patient friends who are generous with their time. This allowed me to talk to them multiple times, join them at numerous events, often on short notice. I wouldn't recommend this approach, if the production timeline is short, but revisiting my interviewees when able, gave me additional space to synthesize information.

In categorizing my work and describing the kind of filmmaker I consider myself to be, the most straightforward definition of my work is of the reflexive form. My films typically draw attention to the filmmaking process itself and there is certainly no suggestion that the documentary is an “objective account of reality.” Certain techniques are used to break the fourth wall including appearing on camera myself as the filmmaker, providing my voice over narration and as well as serving as a main character. The influence of the filmmaker on the narrative is transparent. This is addressed later in the section regarding my “artistic approach,” but it is important to note that throughout my life I have often sought refuge through creative arts. Whether acting, singing, writing and telling stories, or most recently making films, artistic expression is the conduit through which I release and process emotion. While this was not the original intention of this, after deeper reflection and immersion into the topic, I allowed it to move in that direction. Luckily, this project was mine, allowing me the freedom to make that decision.

One of the biggest challenges of taking this approach was deciding when to be “finished” with the processing of information and the emotion around it. Topics like these are open ended and there are rarely neat and natural ending points. Determining how and where to truncate the story was a difficult part of editing this film. Another challenge in making this film was designing the visual narrative or in other words, finding the right visuals to match the thoughts and feelings being described. I often get to a point in the editing process where I ask myself “why can’t you just tell a straightforward story?” But my interests lie in teasing apart complicated concepts that are core to the human experience, which are typically anything but “straightforward.”

This segues into what for me is the most significant accomplishment of this film; that it helped me feel more connected to the world around me. The process of making this film, the discussions with interview subjects, and the time spent in solitude in a place that I care for, resulted in a new realization of my place in the world. Ultimately, I create art to help myself move through difficult emotions and times of my life. Coming out of this filmmaking process with a new outlook and understanding of my role as a human, feels like an extraordinary accomplishment.

I don’t have a specific plan for this film after school, but I do have plans for distribution, which I describe in more detail later in the “Distribution and Marketing” section of this paper. An obvious audience for this film includes the board members of the North Fork Preservation Association (NFPA) and the Flathead Rivers Alliance (FRA), since the board president of the NFPA and executive director of FRA are prominently featured. Potential showings at a local events or fundraisers in the spring or summer of 2025 are also options. I do not anticipate

challenges to showing the film in those scenarios, however it may tread a bit farther into the philosophical realm than the public may feel comfortable or interested in going. In all honesty, anticipated public perception of this approach and form played no part in my artistic choices. As a result, the central question or concept might be less interesting to certain audiences. My goal was to motivate the people who are already contemplating their relationship and duty to the natural world to take the step into action.

Connection to the Field

In the academic context of documentary filmmaking, *A Call to Rewild* is an essay film. According to film theory as cited by Huxley, or Godard, and as quoted by Rascaroli, the three main poles of the essay film frame are “the personal and the autobiographical; the objective, the factual the concrete-particular; and the abstract-universal” (Rascaroli, 2008). The ideas or concepts presented in essay films are not always done so in a linear fashion but rather interweave various arguments and rationales. The very structure of *A Call to Rewild* is a weaving together of the personal thoughts and reflections of the filmmaker with the responses of the individuals interviewed.

The central question in this film is “why do I feel a ‘stirring’ both physically and emotionally when amidst natural grandeur?” Attempting to answer this question is predicated on the assumption that the audience has also been emotionally or spiritually moved during time spent in a wild or natural place. If they have not thus far experienced such a stirring, then this film can serve as inspiration to form a connection with a wild place because of the evidentiary impact it can have on the human experience. The essay film format was appropriate for this film because there is not a formal conclusion presented at the end. The story is the journey itself,

taken by the filmmaker to think through a complicated issue and get closer to finding an answer to the original question. This story is told through various voices including the filmmaker's and is not presented in a straight line. The essay film approach offers the flexibility to incorporate the often-intangible realm of human emotion into navigation through the argument, and does not suggest that the story will take the quickest route from A to B.

While there are many studied examples of Essay Films, the experimental nature of essay film style leaves much open to interpretation. In analyzing "traditional" essay films such as Chris Marker's *San Soleil*, I don't feel the "personal" or "autobiographical." Maybe I just don't understand it, but it does not stir me on an emotional level. While I appreciate Michael Moore's incorporation of his own connection to his subject matters such as in *Roger & Me*, I do not intend to take on a strong or aggressive display of my personal beliefs. If pressed to find a closer representation of a style that resonates for me, I would cite Ross McElwee's, *Sherman's March*, as a primary source of inspiration for my form, as I will serve as the focus, or my reflections will serve as a central thread for the film's narrative. Throughout *Sherman's March*, McElwee interjects his observations of this subject's shared ideas and how those ideas impact his own thinking. He is also transparent about the original intention for his film, but how he will shift course due to changing circumstances in his personal life. This is an approach that I also strive to replicate.

A film that invites the audience along on a personal journey of processing emotion is *Dick Johnson is Dead* by Kirsten Johnson, which was another source of inspiration for my film. The filmmaker Kirsten Johnson stages the death of her father, Dick Johnson in several creative and often comical ways. While the film is quite humorous, there are vulnerable moments

between Kirsten and her father Dick on camera. This film does not hide the filmmaker from view, and the audience is aware of the filmmaking process throughout. In addition to using a reflexive style of filmmaking, Johnson is also focusing on a universal concept of mortality and loss of family, dissecting it through the application of her own unique experience. Similarly, in *A Call to Rewild*, the filmmaker's personal relationship with the natural world and professional career in stewardship serves as the foundation through which the larger concept of human connection to wild places is explored in the film. Purposeful communication of my personal connection to the subject matter is done to build trust with the audience and explain how I have some authority to talk on the subject. By leaning on the words and shared experiences of others, I tell the story of how a shared connection to a place has been leveraged to advance its care, outside of the box of accepted government management.

The New York Times Opinion Documentaries served as a primary source of research for the film structure. Knowing this film would lean heavily on my opinions and experience with the subject matter, I scoured the Op-Docs archive to find inspiring works to identify their form and structure I wanted to replicate. *Roswell* by Bill Brown, invites the audience on a road trip to the desert landscape of New Mexico to learn more about the alleged UFO sightings of the late 1940's. While the cinematography style is not one that I replicate entirely, visuals while driving, as well as the view of the road from the driver's seat were captured. In *Roswell*, Brown shares his philosophical reflections on the topic of alien life, allowing the viewer to quite literally read his diary as he scribed his ideas on paper. While similar visuals were not ultimately incorporated in *A Call to Rewild*, many of these moments were captured in the field.

Colin Levy introduces himself as the filmmaker in *My Grandfather's Memory Book* and takes the viewer on a journey through his grandfather's art career to uncover who he was and the larger concept of what we leave behind when we die. He uses his art of filmmaking to explore this concept and come to his own conclusion about the creations and type of impact he would like to make as a filmmaker. Levy serves as the narrator for his short film and leans on voice over narration to carry the story from beginning to end.

In addition to reporting on films that served as inspiration, film components that are of strength and/or weakness for me as a filmmaker are worth discussion, under the larger umbrella of this topic of "connection to the field." One area in which I feel comfortable is conducting interviews. While my interview subjects were friends and expressed safety in speaking freely with me, I have also developed interviewing skills throughout my career which enable me to ask questions that elicit substantive responses. For instance, I began my interview with Flannery Freund by asking her what drives her to be engaged in conservation work and volunteer her time for public service. When she answered that it was "just natural" I pushed her to think harder and look a little deeper. With myself as a witness, Freund realized and admitted that she is a natural born leader and cares for people. She feels a sense of moral duty to keep the North Fork Flathead "the greatest place on planet Earth" for generations of people she will never meet.

PART THREE

Film Logline

In *A Call to Rewild*, the filmmaker sets off on a personal journey to better understand her motivations as a conservationist. Drawing on the personal experience of the filmmaker and interviews with other conservation professionals, this essay film invites the audience to contemplate their personal connection to wild places as well as the collective human motivation to protect those places.

Film Synopsis

A Call to Rewild begins with the filmmaker driving on a dirt road, towards a river, with an expansive view of the Livingston Mountain range on the western border of Glacier National Park. The next montage of clips shows the film's subject (in this case the filmmaker) setting up "camp" in the back of her car, then going through the morning rituals of making coffee. The voice over narration introduces the viewer to the concept of "stewardship" and the human responsibility to care for the world around us. The filmmaker explains why we are in this place to collectively contemplate human motivation to be a steward.

The first interview is with a long-time resident of Polebridge, MT, the only township along the North Fork of the Flathead River between Columbia Falls and the Canadian border. Flannery Freund owns and operates the Home Ranch Bottoms, one of the few bars and restaurants in this area and has a long history of participating and engaging in stewardship activities and management processes that affect the area. She is passionate about keeping the

North Fork the way it is for future generations and feels a sense of duty to ensuring its protection.

The second interview is with the current Executive Director of the Flathead Rivers Alliance, Sheena Pate, who lives in Columbia Falls and leads education programs and stewardship activities that invite the public to participate in protecting the three forks of the Flathead River system. She offers a personal and sentimental connection that fuels her desire to do this work which should resonate with many viewers.

The film continues to weave in reflections of the filmmaker with other poignant reflections from Flannery Freund and Sheena Pate including the inextricable link between caring for people and caring for the natural world. Sheena Pate offers stewardship as a way for people to connect who may otherwise never see themselves interacting with each other. Both women articulate the importance of connecting with the wild to better appreciate life.

Topic Summary

Overwhelming scientific evidence, gathered and reported for decades, has repeatedly shown that Earth's climate is changing (NASA, 2025). Furthermore, climate change is impacting everything from weather patterns, water availability and quality, wildlife habitat health and abundance, food systems, the spread of disease; the list goes on. As widely accepted as these facts are, the degradation of natural resource quality and human disconnection from the natural world continues. As population grows and technology advances, humans are becoming increasingly separated from the original life source—the planet itself. In my film I argue that this disconnection has enabled humans to forget their innate responsibility to care for or actively steward the natural world around them.

There is much discussion around this issue of human and environmental disconnect, or the “original trauma,” as described in the novel by Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*. In this book, Weller claims the first traumatic experience for human beings was the advancement of our societies which resulted in insulation from the natural world rather than a continued component of its functioning, as indigenous people had for millennia.

Modern technological society has forgotten what it feels like to be embedded in a living culture, one rich with stories and traditions, rituals and patterns of instruction that help us become true human beings. We have forgotten the commons of the soul – the primary satisfactions that sustained and nourished community and the individual for tens of thousands of years. We have substituted a strange, frenzied obsession with ‘earning a living’ – one of the most obscene phrases in our world – for the vital and fragrant life of the soul. We have sadly turned the ritual of life into the routine of existence. This forgetting has reduced the arc of our experience down to its tiniest hub. (Weller, 2015).

According to Weller this disconnection in part, has allowed many millions of humans to feel separate from the rest of the natural world, outside of it and not intimately connected to it. It could be argued that this disconnection, the lack of believing one is an integral part of another’s functioning and survival, facilitates a diminishes sense of responsibility to extend care.

In her novel *Braiding Sweetgrass*, professor and ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer beautifully portrays the critical role humans play in the larger workings of the natural world. Through her personal anecdotes of raising children and caring for a small corner of the world in the Adirondacks of northern New York, Kimmerer displays the tangible ways in which humans can play a part in the thriving of their surrounding environment. She argues that humans possess an innate ability to sense the needs of other living things, even if we have forgotten how to listen, and have a responsibility to provide the necessary interventions for those things to thrive. This

reciprocity between human and other living things is what allows a continued and functioning ecosystem.

Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship. Just as all beings have a duty to me, I have a duty to them. If an animal gives its life to feed me, I am in turn bound to support its life. If I receive a stream's gift of pure water, then I am responsible for returning a gift in kind. An integral part of a human's education is to know those duties and how to perform them. (Kimmerer, 2013).

These concepts of the human and nature connection were also elucidated in interviews with Flannery Freund and Sheena Pate. Freund felt strongly that humans have a moral responsibility to maintain the ecological workings of the places we inhabit. Pate describes a passion to give back as a motivator for doing this work. I am certainly motivated by a sense of duty and obligation to protect the places that allow me to exist. Kimmerer also discusses gratitude, posing the question "What would it be like to be raised on gratitude, to speak to the natural world as a member of the democracy of species, to raise a pledge of interdependence? Can we agree to be grateful for all that is given?" She goes on to suggest that instead of a Pledge of Allegiance we enact a Thanksgiving Address, an expression of respect "toward all our nonhuman relatives, not one political entity, but to all of life" (Kimmerer, 2013) (p. 112).

Freund also expressed a strong care for people as a source of motivation for her to engage in any number of issues. Sheena Pate articulated how environmental stewardship activities have the power to bring people together from "all walks of life" building connection within the community around a shared love of place. This concept is the focus of a more recently established field of study called "intersectional environmentalism," which argues that adequate

care for the environment is not possible without caring for people and addressing systems of oppression that perpetuate injustice (Thomas, 2022).

Without a personal connection to wild places individuals may fail to recognize their mortality and therefore are less appreciative of life. While there is no explicitly stated conclusion to this essay film, I hope the audience comes to the realization that without wild places we lose an avenue to understanding what it means to be alive, and to be a part a larger living system. In essence, if we aren't on an individual level connecting with and caring for the natural world around us, we may slowly stop caring for many other aspects of our lives, including our communities.

Humans are living through a time of extreme disconnection from each other and from the rest of the living world. This disconnection has fueled irreversible loss of biodiversity, growing inequality and unspeakable trauma across the world. This film was created as a reminder for myself why stewardship is critical and arguably my most important job as a human being living on Earth. I think the world needs this film as permission to be vulnerable, look inside and remember that every individual is a part of and not separate from the larger system. And according to Thomas, maintaining connection to one another and the planet while also establishing a relationship of reciprocal care is essential for our ecosystems to thrive. I do not see any other way we can begin to repair the world without starting inside ourselves and reconnecting to the wild.

Artistic Approach

My filmmaking process is messy at best. I usually start with an idea that seems straight forward, but by the time I get to the sausage making, it's a jumbled mess. What ultimately helps is sitting down and writing an essay. This is why most of my films take on an essay form told the first-person narrative. Creating art has always been a way for me to process my lived experience, to navigate the thoughts I have about my experience and what it means to be a human being, living on Earth at this moment in time. Throughout my life, this hasn't always looked like film, but it has always been creative. Whatever the medium - music, dance, acting, painting, candle making, gardening - creating has been the avenue through which I attempt to better understand why things are the way they are in the world and more clearly define the part I am supposed to play.

When I experience profound moments in which I become aware of my life and place in the world, I want others to feel those moments of keen awareness. It is these existential moments of understanding how the universe works and why, as one might imagine happening at the moment of death, that I most want to share myself experiencing with others. That powerful, important, once in a lifetime moment of clarity, is the approach I take to storytelling. I use that moment of personal awakening to help guide others to their own.

In the end, I would like for my work to have a positive impact on the world, whether large or small. If my method of storytelling helps others reach a greater level of understanding and hopefully appreciation, then I have succeeded. To have the greatest impact, the story needs to be authentic – and to me, the greatest authenticity comes from telling your own story. And through sharing my story and leading by example, others can examine their own lives and

discover their own passions. By leading with transparency and vulnerability, others may also begin to feel comfort in spaces where they feel exposed and unsure. With films that reflect learning, growing, making mistakes, but trying our best – essentially approaching the world with positive intentions—audiences can feel safe to open their hearts and minds.

Distribution and Marketing

The distribution of my film will begin internally, with my existing pages and accounts. I will ensure I have posted my film on my personal website, with links to my website and the film on my Film Freeway page and LinkedIn page. I will then begin with self-promotion and marketing of the film via my personal publication platforms which at this point only include my social media channels: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo. Once these platforms are all professionally designed and coordinated, I will begin seeking out avenues for distributing this film externally to larger audiences. I envision primarily starting with a local screening of the film in and around the Flathead region of Montana. The Flathead Rivers Alliance is very supportive of the production of this film and excited to utilize the final product to share their story in the communities they serve. The Executive Director, Sheena Pate and I have discussed hosting a screening at a pint night fundraiser in either Kalispell or Whitefish, MT in the spring or summer of 2025. In addition to Flathead River Alliance hosted events, there are many community and public meetings that are held across the Glacier region that would be relevant settings to screen this film. I will utilize my relationships with other nonprofit organizations and government entities to find an appropriate meeting or public gathering where a screening would be of interest, such as a Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Planning meeting, or the “Interlocal” meeting that twice per year in the North Fork of the Flathead.

In addition to small screenings in targeted communities and audiences of residents and organizations, I recognize benefits in submitting the film to local or topic relevant film festivals. The annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival seems like an ideal fit, as the focus of that festival rests on river-specific conservation and adventure stories that inspire stewardship. There is also the Big Fork Film Festival that showcases film from Montana filmmakers which has a special category for films that are filmed in the region. Big Fork is an important community in the Flathead Rivers larger watershed and its residents play a role in the success of river stewardship efforts. Finally, the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival which happens annually in Missoula, MT has a special Montana Filmmaker category, and my film would be a viable candidate for selection in that festival.

I am a founding board member of the Flathead Rivers Alliance (FRA), and my hope is that the organization can utilize the film for its own purposes, whether that's fundraising, awareness raising, or overall promotion of their work. FRA has expressed interest in promoting the film on its website and social media channels as well as announcing it in their newsletter, which currently has over 2,000 subscribers from the area. My goal is the film will be utilized at local levels to elevate and propel the success of FRA forward, inspiring more residents to engage with their work.

Key Creative Personnel

Marit Ehmke and I have worked together on numerous projects and have a complementary skill set that often results in a balanced, yet creative cinematic approach. For example, Ehmke's contributions to my film include macro level cinematography, while my visuals are often landscape level. I relied on Ehmke's eye for the small but impactful visuals

while she also supported me in the field. Ehmke also filmed my reflection scenes and B-roll of the area.

Riley Young has assisted me with past projects in the editing stage, and I relied on her talents once again with this film. Young has a gift for seeing the bigger picture and selecting the most impactful visuals to reinforce the narrative concepts being shared or explained. When reworking the original version of this film, Young was instrumental in stitching together a storyline that more impactfully incorporated the filmmaker voice with those of the interview subjects.

Alex Pickle is a gifted music writer who wrote the score for my first-year film and salvaged the audio for my second-year film. I have brought him on once again to help both with audio mixing and to write the score for this film.

Authorship and Access

As revealed in my film, I was introduced to the North Fork of the Flathead on a trip I made to Glacier National Park over ten years ago. In 2014 I began working for an organization called American Rivers, as their outreach and communications associate focused on the western region of Montana. My primary responsibility was to build grassroots support for federal legislation that would expand “Wild and Scenic” river status to eligible rivers in Montana, which currently do not have the same level of protection. At the time, the only Wild and Scenic Rivers in Montana were a 150-mile section of the Upper Missouri River, and the Three Forks of the Flathead River, of which the North Fork Flathead is a part.

In building support for new resource protections, a good starting point is learning how existing protections came to be. To put my work into context, I dove into the history surrounding

the Wild and Scenic River designation of the North, Middle and South forks of the Flathead River, generally known as the “Three Forks.” This required meeting with landowners along the North Fork, local business owners operating along all Three Forks, and National Park Service and Forest Service agency professionals who manage the rivers. In short, I got to know a lot of people over the years and many of those individuals became friends and colleagues.

After participating in public planning processes, it became clear there was a need and a desire for a locally based organization to support the agencies in managing the river system. Many agencies are strapped thin and have limited capacity to do much beyond the minimum when overseeing the lands and waters they manage. The Flathead National Forest (FNF) was struggling in the Flathead, and the public was noticing. I, along with a handful of other stakeholders in the region approached the leadership at the FNF and proposed establishing a separate organization, a “friends” group of sorts, to work with the FNF in carrying out specific management activities. Primarily, we saw a gap in outreach and education to river users and recreators who could benefit from understanding what it means for a river to be designated “Wild and Scenic” and the roles and responsibilities of anyone who enjoys recreation on a Wild and Scenic River.

In 2020, during the peak of COVID we successfully founded the Flathead Rivers Alliance (FRA) with the mission to protect and enhance the wild and scenic qualities of the Three Forks of the Flathead River system. My two interview subjects include the current Executive Director of the FRA, and one of the founding board members of the FRA. While I have since left American Rivers, I learned a great deal being immersed in the Flathead community. I discovered that even though a river may have a Wild and Scenic designation, which is officially the highest

form of protection a river can receive, although there can be gaps in management and limited capacity to carry out the activities required to keep those wild and scenic qualities intact. My belief is we need to show that our existing designations are working and effective before we can expect people to support new designations. Ultimately, we need to establish a sense of personal responsibility to care for these resources, regardless of a designation.

Due to my extensive involvement in the community of the North Fork and my knowledge and background in public engagement processes that move conservation and protection forward, I was uniquely poised to tell this story. One can see the many different iterations this story could take, and perhaps there will be more stories to come from this singular, yet vast river system. The story I told came from the access I had to individuals with a personal connection to the land and rivers in focus. This access, complemented by my own connection to the North Fork of the Flathead, empowered me to be vulnerable and share an extremely personal analysis of my motivations to care for the world around me.

Financial Information

This is a rough breakdown of expenses for production of my film. Because I utilized friends and colleagues, who refused payment, I ended up paying well below the industry average for production. I did not pay myself, nor did I have to rent equipment.

Table 1. Film Budget

PRODUCTION TEAM		
<u>Description</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Producer/Director (me)		
Camera Operation and Cinematography		\$ 300
Sound Recording (me)		
Total Production Team		\$ 300.00
EQUIPMENT		
<u>Description</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Amount</u>
XC-15 and tripod		
Sound equipment		
Total Equipment - will use personal or borrow from Montana State University		
FIELD & TRANSPORT		
<u>Description</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Amount</u>
lodging and food (2 nights/2 people)	250	\$ 500.00
Total Field		\$ 500.00
POST PRODUCTION		
<u>Description</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Animation	500	\$ 500.00
Editing	1000	\$ 1,000.00
Composed Score	500	\$ 500.00
Soundtrack & Mix	500	\$ 500.00
Total Post Production		\$ 2,500.00
Film Total		\$ 3,300.00

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