

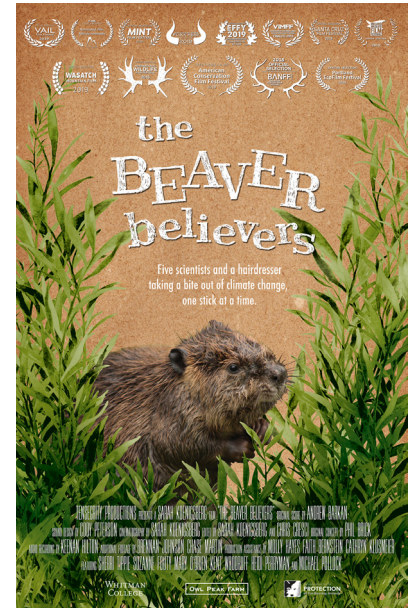


www.thebeaverbelievers.com

FILM SYNOPSIS

Sometimes the best solutions to the biggest problems can be found in the most unexpected places. Meet the beaver believers: five scientists and a sassy, spicy hairdresser, tackling climate change, one stick at a time.

The Beaver Believers is the urgent yet whimsical story of an unlikely cadre of activists who share a common vision: restoring the North American Beaver, that most industrious, ingenious, bucktoothed engineer, to the watersheds of the arid West. The Beaver Believers encourage us to embrace a new paradigm for managing our western lands, one that seeks to partner with the natural world rather than overpower it. As a keystone species, beaver enrich their ecosystems, creating the complexity and resiliency our watersheds need to absorb the impacts of climate change. Beavers can show us the way and even do much of the work for us, if only we can find the humility to trust in the restorative power of nature and our own ability to play a positive role within it. Shot in 8 western US states, Mexico, and Canada, through desert drought, raging wild fires, spring floods, and wetland tranquility, this film will change the way you think about climate change and inspire you to step up confront the challenges we face.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKER



Sarah Koenigsberg is an award-winning filmmaker, photographer, and educator whose work focuses on stories of art, environment, and community in the American West. Her films and teaching cross disciplines, illuminating the power of storytelling as a medium through which to explore complex science and policy issues. Her commercial clients include the US Forest Service, National Park Service, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, US Department of Energy, Discovery Channel Canada, Grand Canyon Trust, Wallowa Resources, Whitman College, Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation, and River Management Society.

Koenigsberg's work has screened across North America in venues such as the National Climate Adaptation Forum, the North American Congress for Conservation Biology, and The Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society's annual conferences. Winner of the Green Spark Award from the American Conservation Film Festival, her feature documentary "The Beaver Believers" has screened worldwide in film festivals such as the Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival, Banff World Tour, International Wildlife Film Festival, London Eco-Film Festival, Ireland Wildlife Film Festival, Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival, Environmental Film Festival at Yale, and the Portland EcoFilm Festival, among others. As an educator, she has developed digital media storytelling curriculums for Whitman College, and has more recently begun offering presentations on science communication. She loves strong coffee, dark chocolate, organizing cupboards, and finding any excuse to climb up high to "get the shot." She detests sticky jar lids and tangled power cords.

CONNECT

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I set out in search of the story for my first feature-length film, I knew I wanted it to be about climate change, but I didn't want to repeat the same apocalyptic "doom and gloom" narrative that we've all seen before. You know the one, with the depressingly unstoppable disasters, the melting glaciers and starving polar bears, where we leave the theatre feeling like crap because it's all our fault. That frame of catastrophic narrative is so often overwhelming to the point of being disempowering and debilitating, that it is actually counter-productive to inciting action. I wanted to engage the topic of climate change through a different narrative, to find a story where climate change could be seen (dare I say it?) almost as an opportunity: as a motivating, inspiring impetus to jump into joyful action. And then I stumbled upon beavers.

On the surface, "The Beaver Believers" is all about these remarkable, adorable, little bucktoothed ecosystem engineers – how they are a keystone species, how they repair and expand riparian habitat, how they seem to counter nearly every negative impact of climate change – but at a deeper level, this film is about so much more. It's about the human spirit, about passionate people striving to make the world more resilient and robust, and shockingly, having a fantastic time as they do so! It's about realizing we have a place within the natural world, and that we have the capacity to be agents of good. It all boils down to what I call "Thinking Like a Beaver." When beavers move in to a watershed, they build their dams and ponds to take care of their own needs, but they do it in a way that simultaneously benefits all of the other creatures around them. We can apply this metaphor to our own lives and think, how can we take care of our needs in a way that simultaneously benefits, rather than detracts from, our community as a whole? How can we take care of ourselves in a way that creates opportunity for others, that promotes more biodiversity, more human diversity, more local economic growth, more sustainability? That is "thinking like a beaver," and our communities and watersheds would be all the more resilient and robust for our efforts.

As I've had the incredible opportunities to share my work with select film festivals over the last year, at every screening I am awed by how profoundly moved the audience is. From the buzz of energy within a packed theatre, and the collective laughter and cheering metered by silent moments of captivated focus; to the surprisingly deep conversations I've had with people afterwards; to the floods of emails from folks looking to engage, to connect with local groups to volunteer, to find resources that will assist their efforts on their creek/forest/farm; it is abundantly clear to me that people desperately want to discover and hold on to nuggets of hope – to feel like they can take actions that matter. That is what the movement of climate adaptation, and the story of "The Beaver Believers," brings to an audience. Thanks for watching.

-Sarah Koenigsberg, summer 2019