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Q&A with Joe Trudeau



Advocating for river conservation, the Wild Rivers Film Tour returns for its second year in Prescott on Friday, April 5, 2024. (Courtesy image)

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Post



The Wild Rivers Film Tour is set to return for its ninth year, serving as both a celebration of untamed waterways and a rallying cry for the preservation of cherished rivers. The event is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, April 5, at the Elks Theatre, 117 E. Gurley St, Prescott.

This year's films include Paddle Tribal Waters, Tsegi Canyon, Querencia, Paatuwaquatsi/Water is Life, Vjosa Forever, and Covenant of the Salmon People.

The film tour is presented by organizations involved in the Upper Verde River Wild and Scenic River campaign, including American Rivers, the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, Friends of the Verde River, and the Yavapai-Apache Nation, among others.

Joe Trudeau, a consultant for the Wilderness Society, will be the emcee at the Wild Rivers Film Tour. Trudeau spoke with Across the Street ahead of the event. The following interview was edited for length and clarity.

What is the goal of the Wild and Scenic River campaign?

We're pursuing national designation through a congressional legislative act to designate the Upper Verde River as a national Wild and Scenic river. So, we're talking about the portion of the river starting just east of Paulen and flowing down almost as far as Clarkdale in the Verde Valley.

How does the annual Wild Rivers Film Tour help achieve that goal?

It showcases a number of films about river conservation and the value of rivers to society and Indigenous communities. Our work to protect the Upper Verde as a wild river is because the river deserves recognition for its contribution to local communities, Indigenous nations in the Verde Valley, wildlife habitat, scenery and quality of life in this area. This will be a fundraiser for us and also it's outreach and education of the public. Throughout the course of the night, I will be educating the public about our efforts to protect the Verde River, why it's important and ways for the public to get involved.

What are the biggest obstacles to informing the public about the need to protect the Upper Verde River?

It's challenging to get to. There aren't many trails and what trails do exist are in pretty rough condition. People tend to protect what they love and if you've never been to the Upper Verde River, it's less likely that you'll love it. So, probably the main hurdle with our public outreach of our effort is the fact that most people just haven't been there.

Have you noticed an impact from the Wild Rivers Film Tour?

Well, this is only the second year that it will be in Prescott. In the nine years, the film tour has grown from its humble beginnings to now a much wider reach. But we feel that last year's tour here in Prescott did help get the word out about our efforts.

To support the cause and learn more, visit www.wildverderiver.org. For more information about the Wild Rivers Film Tour and to buy tickets, call 928-777-1370 or visit www.prescottelkstheatre.org.

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