



# LET'S TALK ABOUT WATER

## FILM & WATER SYMPOSIA

### FILM GUIDE

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Films have great potential for communicating water science but must be chosen carefully to capture the audience's attention and to encourage dialog between the panel and the audience. Filmmakers have vastly different styles that will engage the audience in different ways. Some films are more straightforward, like *Last Call at the Oasis*, and hit the user with the facts to make a strong impact. Other films, like *How to Let Go* and *Chasing Ice*, use emotion and artistic visuals to connect with the audience, then weave in the scientific facts as support for the emotions that are evoked. By clearly defining the objectives and target audience of your event, you will be able to choose a film that resonates strongly with your audience and has a strong overall impact.

It is important to choose a film that the target audience will connect to, and is not too far outside of their comfort zone. For example, a dramatic film like *South to North (Sud eau nord deplacer)*, which has a powerful musical score but almost no speaking, can have a strong impact if framed with enough context, but would not be an appropriate choice for an audience of undecided undergraduates if your goal is to convince them to take interest in water science careers. Our goal is that this film guide will help you select the best possible film for your event!

#### Films are an effective medium for science communication and education because they:

- Use storytelling to engage audiences emotionally
- Provide context to science
- Get everyone on the same page
- Invoke emotion which makes the audience care about the topic
- Help the audience feel like they can contribute to the problem

#### This films guide evaluates each film on the following elements:

- Themes/ Issues
- Style (artistic, documentary)
- Length (short format/ long format)
- Potential questions/ points to bring up for the panelists
- Ideas/ Featured for panelists
- Examples of how film has been used in the past

## Additional tips to know before you show!

- Screening licenses are often required for public showings of the film, even for not for profit events that do not charge admission
- Screening licenses for these types of events are often inexpensive (\$100 - \$500)
- Often, producers are excited and supportive of showing the film as part of an educational LTAW event and will work with you on the licensing.
- It is important to test the film's projection prior to showing, preferably on the day of. Test the film in the event space using the projector and audio that will be used during the live event. Many day-of technical issues could have been solved by testing the film first!
- It is important to ask the panelists to view the film prior to the event, if possible, so that they're not seeing it for the first time at the event. This enables them to prepare their thoughts and discuss major points with the other panelists ahead of time. Many films can now be shared electronically using an online sharing link that can be obtained from the producer.

## CHASING ICE, 2012

DIRECTED BY JEFF ORLOWSKI. 1 HOUR 15 MINUTES

**Website:** <https://chasingice.com/>

**IMDB Description:** *Chasing Ice* follows National Geographic photographer James Balog across the Arctic as he deploys time-lapse cameras designed for one purpose: to capture a multi-year record of the world's changing glaciers.

**Themes:** Climate Change, Glacial Ice Melt, Sea level rise

**Style:** Documentary, Biography; Very visually compelling

**Length:** Long format, feature film

### Potential Questions/ Points:

- How does photography help to visualize climate change?
- Is the focus upon the photographer a useful tool for understanding the process of melting glaciers? Does it help or hinder the scientific message and value?
- Provide status update on glaciers since the film was released; bring in current situation. For example, show updated maps of glacier melt
- People say that climate change is a hoax – how does the imagery support or dispute this idea?
- What are the issues/impacts of sea level rise?

### Examples:

- Organize an environmental photography contest to coincide with the event
- Show status updates of glacier melt

**Potential Panelists:**

- Severe weather expert, earth systems, Sea Level Rise Specialists
- Professor of Climatology and Glaciology
- Representatives from local ski resorts

**Notes:** This film is a touchstone for a set of issues and a cascade of events– it opens the door to discuss other issues (severe weather patterns, depression of the jet stream, sea level rise which leads to coastal inundation, salt water intrusion, flooding of island nations, etc.). Use the film to connect to other major issues.

## COWSPIRACY: THE SUSTAINABILITY SECRET, 2014

DIRECTED BY KIP ANDERSON AND KEEGAN KUHN. 1 HOUR AND 25 MINUTES

**Website:** <http://www.cowspiracy.com/>

**IMDB Description:** *Cowspiracy* follows the shocking, yet humorous, journey of an aspiring environmentalist, as he daringly seeks to find the real solution to the most pressing environmental issues and true path to sustainability.

**Themes:** Animal Agriculture, Green House Gases, Sustainability

**Style:** Traditional Documentary

**Length:** Feature film, Long format

**Potential Questions/Points:**

- How can policy be reformed to reduce pollution caused by farming

**Previous Panelists:**

- Water Resources Scientist
- Professor of Sustainable Agriculture
- Farm/ Dairy Owners
- Commercial Agriculture Educators or Specialists
- Local environmental groups

**Examples:** One university showed this film and then did fact checking to encourage the audience to think critically about the film, and not just take it at face value.

**Notes:** The film follows a personal story.

The Cowspiracy website has nice resources, including a facts breakdown and infographic.

The exclusive Netflix release is a new cut of Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret that has been updated with new facts and information.

To purchase a screening license: <http://www.cowspiracy.com/screening-license>

# DAMNATION, 2014

DIRECTED BY BEN KNIGHT AND TRAVIS RUMMEL. 1 HOUR 27 MINUTES

**Website:** <http://damnationfilm.com/the-film>, <http://damnation.bullfrogcommunities.com/>

**IMDB Description:** This powerful film odyssey across America explores the sea change in our national attitude from pride in big dams as engineering wonders to the growing awareness that our own future is bound to the life and health of our rivers. Where obsolete dams come down, rivers bound back to life, giving salmon and other wild fish the right of return to primeval spawning grounds, after decades without access. DamNation's majestic cinematography and unexpected discoveries move through rivers and landscapes altered by dams, but also through a metamorphosis in values, from conquest of the natural world to knowing ourselves as part of nature.

**Themes:** Dam Removal, Renewable Energy, Environmental Impacts of Hydropower, Watershed Health

**Style:** Documentary, Adventure, (Activist)

**Length:** Feature Film, Long Format

## Potential Questions/ Points:

- Why build a dam?
- Why should I care about dam removal?
- Don't dams provide clean, green, renewable energy? Is there such thing? What are the unexpected consequences?
- What are the costs/drawbacks to other alternative energy sources? (ex: solar, wind, tidal)
- How do dams effect watershed/ ecosystem health?
- What are the pros and cons of dam removal?
- What role do dams play in climate change?

## Panelist Examples:

- Water Resources Policy Specialists
- Army Civil Works Representatives
- Secretary of the Interior Representatives
- Local recreation organizations or outdoor sports groups

## Examples:

- This film lends itself well to connections between river sports (kayaking, whitewater rafting), letting the river run free, etc. Reach out to local sponsors for outdoor sports/recreation.
- One university invited two panelists who were involved in federal agencies and hosted a Federal Career informational lunch.
- Take a field trip to a local dam removal site!

**Notes:** Film screening information can be found here:

[http://damnation.bullfrogcommunities.com/damn\\_order\\_form](http://damnation.bullfrogcommunities.com/damn_order_form)

# HOW TO LET GO OF THE WORLD AND LOVE ALL THE THINGS CLIMATE CAN'T CHANGE, 2016

DIRECTED BY JOSH FOX. 2 HOURS 7 MINUTES

**Website:** <http://www.howtoletgomovie.com/>

**IMDB Description:** Documentarian Josh Fox (*Gasland*) travels the globe to meet with global climate change "warriors" who are committed to reversing the tide of global warming. Funny and tragic, inspiring and enlightening, the film examines the intricately woven forces that threaten the stability of the planet and the lives of its inhabitants.

**Themes:** Climate Change, Moral Responsibility

**Style:** Documentary, Artistic

**Length:** Feature Film, long format

**Potential Questions/Points:**

- Climate Change/ Global Warming
- Fossil Fuel Dependency
- Fracking
- Many stories can be linked/connected to local issues. Ask the audience which stories they most connected with.
- Additional Talking points available at: <http://howtoletgomovie.com/img/party-guide-htlg.pdf>

**Potential Panelists:**

- Severe weather and Climate Change experts
- City Planners/ Government Officials (to talk about how cities can prepare for Climate Change)
- Urban Design and Landscape Architects

**Notes:** Potential Drawbacks – film is on the long side.

This is an “activist” film from a very personal point of view. The emotion is very powerful and on the surface to try to engage people with the subject, but there is a lot of information in the movie. Each story is full of scientific information. The emotional/ personal/ visual aspects are used to draw the audience in, then are supported by science. The viewing guide has a lot of material for supporting documentation.

# LAST CALL AT THE OASIS, 2011

DIRECTED BY JESSICA YU. 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES.

**Website:** <http://www.takepart.com/lastcall/>

**IMDB Description:** The global water crisis will be the central issue facing our world this century. We can manage this problem, but only if we are willing to act now. Last Call at the Oasis is a powerful new documentary that shatters myths behind our most precious resource. This film exposes defects in the current system, shows communities already struggling with its ill-effects and highlights individuals championing revolutionary solutions during the global water crisis. Firmly establishing the global water crisis as the central issue facing our world this century, the film posits that we can manage this problem if we act now.

**Theme(s):** Water Quality, Water Management, Water Pollution, Water Scarcity

**Style:** Traditional Documentary

**Length:** Long format, feature film

## Potential Questions/Points:

- Because this is an older film, there are many points that could be followed up on. Discuss the resolution (if any) of the following points and how it might have differed from the audience expectations:
  - Atrazine ruling
  - Erin Brokovitch regulations
  - Nevada pipeline ruling
- California drought – got worse and then got better. What does this mean?
- In the news: The water crisis in Flint, MI happened since this film was released. It has been called a huge disaster which will have lifelong consequences for those exposed. It has received attention on the national scale, but the national reaction has not very strong. No one was fired, problems still exist, and there doesn't seem to be an appropriate level of public outrage. What does this mean? How is it similar to the topics in the film?

## Potential Panelists:

- Water Management staff
- Division of Water Resources representative
- Water Resources specialists
- Environmental Consulting firms

**Examples:** This is a popular film choice because the range of issues presented makes it very versatile.

**Notes:** Film rights for Last Call at the Oasis - Participant Media, the production company, referred to Barb Nelson at Swank Motion Pictures. Barb is the contact for educational rights for the film. Barb's contact information is 1-800-876-5577 or [bnelson@swank.com](mailto:bnelson@swank.com).

Potential Drawbacks – this film is relatively long, but is fast paced and very well shot. The stories are now becoming out of date, but they hold up well and provide opportunities for follow up.

The film has humor – Jack Black makes a cameo. This helps to lighten the scientific facts a bit.

## SUD EAU NORD DEPLACER, 2014

DIRECTED BY ANTOINE BOUTET. 1 HOUR 50 MINUTES.

[IMDB Description](#): Sud eau nord deplacer follows in the steps of the Nan Shui Bei Diao - South to North Water Transfer - the world's largest water transfer project, stretching between southern and northern China and artistically depicts the environmental and social impacts.

**Theme(s)**: Water management, Water rights, Environmental justice,

**Style**: Artistic Documentary, Historical

**Length**: Long format, feature film

### Potential Questions/ Points:

- What is a water transfer project? Why was this project implemented?
- Explain the details of the South to North Water transfer project. What are the benefits? What are the concerns?
- Does the film help you to understand the issue? Why or Why not? Is there bias in the film?

### Potential Panelists:

- Water Resources and Management Specialist
- Army Corps of Engineers representative
- Social Scientist

**Examples**: This film has a very powerful musical score and little speaking. It has been shown with a live musical accompaniment that heightens the impact of the film.

**Notes**: This film takes a more dramatic and artistic approach compared to the other documentaries listed here. There is very little speaking in the film and no narration. Instead it uses compelling visuals to depict the controversy associated with the water transfer project. While the film can be very powerful, it must be used in the right context for the right audience. Without proper context, audience members may not connect with the film.

## OTHER GENERAL PANELIST IDEAS:

Panel discussions are most successful when the panelists have diverse backgrounds that relate to the film or local issues. Many experts can be found right at local universities. It's also a great opportunity to involve local community members that may bring unique perspectives – such as environmental photographers or local watershed groups.

Examples of panelists that we have seen in the past include:

- Authors/ Editors of local books or magazines (ex: Natural History Magazine)
- Environmental Photographers
- Local environmental groups or consulting firms (ex: friends of the river, watershed groups)
- Staff from local federal agency divisions (ex: EPA, USGS, USDA, NOAA, Army Corps)
- Local government – we have had former governors and senators participate in these events!
- Recreational organizations (ex: Appalachian Mountain Club, Paddling Clubs, etc.)
- Director of the film – directors are often involved with film screenings for their events! Especially with smaller scale, local films, directors are often willing to participate in screenings should their schedules allow. It never hurts to ask!



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