

Colorado Environmental Film Festival Is Back Live Next Week, Featuring 90+ Films

Golden Real Estate has proudly co-sponsored this unique film festival for at least a decade. For the first time since 2020, the festival is back live at the American Mountaineering Center (AMC) in downtown Golden Feb. 23-26, but most of the films can also be viewed online starting the following week.

During the pandemic, the festival ("CEFF") was only virtual, and I loved it because I was able to see far more films than I could have seen in person.

Meanwhile, if you go online to <http://ceff2023.eventive.org/films>, you get to read descriptions and view trailers for all 97 films in the festival. At right is a screenshot from that website, showing just three of those films' thumbnails. I was particularly drawn to "The Power of Activism," and look forward to seeing the full 53-minute Australian film about six young women activists out to save the planet. "Purple Haze" is about the purple martin, described as "America's favorite backyard bird."



An in-person "all access" pass costs \$90 and can be purchased at the same website. The virtual pass is \$75.

As before, the films are combined into 28 "collections" such as the "Activism Collection" (my favorite), each of which can be purchased for \$12 if you don't want to buy the all-access or virtual pass. All the information is on that website. Click on the "Menu" link at the top left of the website to see the various pages with all the information you need to attend the festival.

As in past festivals, there is a free (but ticket required) "Community Opening Night" on the 23rd which includes announcement of the winning films in various categories. It starts at 6 pm in the AMC auditorium and is followed at 7:15 by the screening of seven of the award-winning films, ranging from a one-minute PSA to a couple 23-minute films. I never miss this event, which is held in the AMC's Foss auditorium.

Although CEFF is an international

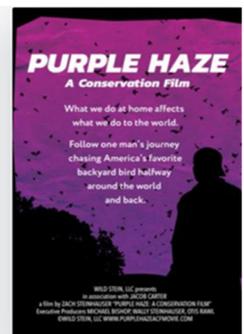
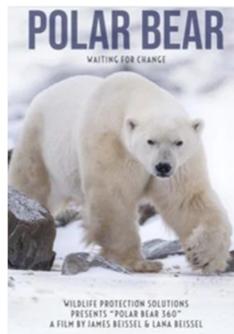


time, there's a free Festival Preview at the University of Denver's Sturm Hall on Thursday, Feb. 16th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

The Foss auditorium is the main venue for the festival at the American Mountaineering Center, but a second theater is created in the AMC's event center to accommodate all the screenings, which begin at 10 a.m. from Friday through Sunday. The virtual access ticket (which I'm going to get) allows you seven days to watch any or all of the films on demand.

al film festival, several of the "collections" feature films made by Colorado filmmakers. There are also 16 accessible collections which are either captioned, subtitled or have no dialog. One collection is of the "Top 10 Best Kids' Short Films."

Other collections which caught my attention include: **Art in Nature; Climate Chaos; Feathered Friends & More; Innovation & Inspiration; Off the Beaten Path;**



People to Know; Special Places; Unique Solutions; and two **Wildlife Collections.**

If you are reading this column in

The festival features young filmmakers from around the nation including Hawaiian youth-made films like "Sunscreen Standoff," and local Colorado young filmmakers like Taylor Saulsbury, who gives voice to her generation's climate anxieties, creating portraits of resistance and resilience in "Right Here. Right Now."

Join in the free virtual "Green Bag Lunch & Learn Series" to hear from local experts as they dig deeper into current event environmental issues, including a closer look at the impact of Climate Chaos on young people's mental health (Wednesday, March 1st at noon).

By attending the festival in person, you also get to participate in **Filmmaker Q&A Sessions** after many of the films to chat live with the filmmakers in attendance or watch one of the many recorded sessions to hear the secrets and intriguing behind-the-scenes stories of the films featured in the festival.

Bill in Legislature Would Enlarge Board of Commissioners

Back in 2013-2014, I was part of a group called "Jeffco5" which ran an unsuccessful petition drive to put on the 2014 ballot an initiative that would increase the number of Jeffco commissioners from three to five and require that they be elected by district instead of at large.

At the time, the Jeffco Board of Commissioners consisted of two Republicans and one Democrat, and they voted 2-1 against enlarging the board to five members, hence the petition drive. Like our 5-member school board, all three commissioners must run countywide, even though they are assigned one-third of the county as their "district."

I mistakenly assumed that once at least two of the commissioners were Democrats, they would put the measure on the ballot without another petition drive. Currently, all three commissioners are Democrats, and it's still not happening.

Last week I ran into one of the commissioners, Andy Kerr, at an event honoring Brittany Petterson, our new member of Congress who succeeded Ed Perlmutter, and asked him about the idea.

He said he favored it, but informed me about a bill (HB23-1180) sponsored in the General Assembly by **Rep. Bob Marshall** and **State Sen. Kevin Priola** which would require all counties with a population over 70,000 to have five county commissioners, at least three of whom are elected by district. Andy told me that if that measure fails, he would consider convincing his fellow commissioners to put such a measure on the Jeffco ballot this fall.

Colorado's **Open Meetings Law (OML)**, which originated in a citizen initiative known as the **Colorado Sunshine Act of 1972**, defines a meeting as "any kind of gathering, convened to discuss public business, in person, by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication." It prohibits any members constituting a quorum of a "local public body" from even talking with each other about a public policy without that meeting being given "full and timely notice" and being opened to the public.

The implications are that any Jeffco commissioner who converses

with or emails a fellow commissioner about a county policy or issue is violating state law, because together they would constitute a quorum of the 3-member Board of County Commissioners. To me, this is the compelling reason why the board must be enlarged to five members.

The argument for electing the commissioners (and school board members) by district instead of at large is equally compelling. If each commissioner must win the votes of a plurality of voters countywide, he or she is not going to give his assigned portion of the county the attention it deserves.

I will testify in favor of HB23-1180 and urge our commissioners to do so as well.

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