



SEVEN-MONTH FILM FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS GLACIER PARK'S ROLE IN MOVIES

Celebrating the Centennial on Screen

By Molly Priddy, 3-18-10

Glacier National Park has long been an ideal destination for movies, with films using the park's sensational settings for decades as a background for drama and adventure.

As a part of the park's 100th birthday celebration, the Glacier Centennial Film Festival will offer seven chances to look into the back story of some of these films and their place in the park's history.

March 18 is the kick-off date for the seven-month-long film festival, which is meant to entertain and inspire, according to the park's centennial coordinator, Kass Hardy.

Each film will be shown in a different community as the festival winds through the centennial year. The first will be in Kalispell, when Signature Theaters plays the thriller, "The River Wild."

This film has close ties to the park, Hardy said, because it was filmed on Glacier's rivers. Glacier Outdoor Center provided the guides for the movie crew when they were there in the 1990s, Hardy said.



Audience members will have a chance to win a rafting trip from Glacier Outdoor Center at the movie, Hardy added.

"Each film that we're doing will have an educational component to it," Hardy said. "There's some fun incentives as well."

Many of the films will include raffles with centennial goods for prizes, she said.

The second film in the series will be shown on April 8 at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts. The film, "Before There Were Parks," is a Montana PBS documentary and the producer, Charles Dye, will be present to answer questions, Hardy said. Audience members will also be treated to clips about Glacier Park from Ken Burns' PBS documentary, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea."

There will be an intermission show highlighting centennial artists and a reception to follow, Hardy said.

The film festival's third installment on May 13 will feature the western classic "Heaven's Gate" at the Whitefish Mountain 4 theater. Hardy said this movie is unique in the festival because many people who acted as extras in it are still in the valley.

There will also be an insider's explanation about how this film changed the way movies were made in national parks, Hardy said.

The June 10 installation at Columbia Falls High School will highlight wildfires in the park with the 1952 movie, "Red Skies of Montana," which featured the Mann Gulch fire of 1949. Hardy said the park is working with the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Park Service to put together an educational presentation about wildfires, and she hopes to have a display about the Big Burn of 1910.

The festival's fifth installation, being shown on July 8 at Lake McDonald Lodge, will offer a special glimpse into the past lives of people who visited and loved the park, Hardy said. It features a compilation of archived video, mostly home movies, from the 1930s and 1940s.

"It's so fun to see what people found interesting back then," Hardy said.

The August 12 showing at St. Mary Visitor Center will be 1954's "Cattle Queen of Montana," which was also filmed in the park, Hardy said. There may be a living history presentation at this film as well, she noted.

The festival's seventh and final installation, "Days of the Blackfeet," will take place on Sept. 22 at Blackfeet Community College in Browning. The documentary may also be accompanied by an educational seminar put on by the college, Hardy

said.

As one of the only events that runs throughout most of the centennial year, Hardy said the festival offers a continuous opportunity for residents to reconnect with the park.

“I think it’s going to be a neat way to tie a lot of the centennial together,” Hardy said.

All shows start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise advertised, and tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors over 62 and children under 10. There are also 100 passes for access to the entire festival, which cost \$40. All passes and tickets can be purchased at Montana Coffee Traders locations and at the door. **[End of article]**

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