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Global Voices Converge in Arizona for Inaugural SkyFire Environmental Film Festival

With submissions from around the world, and screenings across prominent Phoenix-area venues, the SkyFire Film Festival positions Arizona as a hub for environmental storytelling and action

Phoenix, AZ – The inaugural SkyFire Environmental Film Festival is set to debut across the greater Phoenix area in March 2026. This premier film festival is a three-day event that combines powerful storytelling with community engagement to inspire environmental action across Arizona and throughout the world. Over 150 films have been submitted to the festival by directors of all ages, backgrounds, and parts of the world. The films' subject matters are just as diverse as their directors and span topics such as climate action, food systems, waste reduction, and community education, to name a few. The finalists will be shown in prominent venues across Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa, which include the Arizona Science Center and the ASU Mix Center, from March 27th through the 29th. The activism shown on-screen will come to life on the streets of Arizona during the festival. Through public transit partnerships, zero-waste initiatives, and service projects, SkyFire will be fighting some of the many environmental challenges Arizonians face every day. Thus, transforming Arizona's environmental challenges into an opportunity for leadership, learning, and powerful sustainability storytelling.

Tickets are now on sale at SkyFireFF.com.

When asked why Arizona was chosen to host the SkyFire Environmental Film Festival, the festival's co-producer, and founder of Urban Farming Education (UFE), Mike McMahon shared:

"Arizona was chosen to host this film festival because it faces some of the most urgent and visible environmental challenges in the country, yet until now there has not been a dedicated environmental film festival creating space for public dialogue around them. Arizona sits at the intersection of water scarcity, extreme heat, rapid urban growth, food insecurity, land management, and climate resilience, making it a living case study for issues affecting the rest of the world. By grounding the festival here, we can elevate stories that reflect Arizona's unique realities while placing them in conversation with films and perspectives from across the globe. The goal is to raise awareness, spark collaboration, and connect local communities, universities, policymakers, and industry leaders to global solutions—positioning Arizona not just as a place experiencing environmental pressure, but as a hub for storytelling, learning, and leadership in sustainability."

The SkyFire Festival has already gained the support of many prominent businesses, educational institutions, and political figures. Mayor Kate Gallego of Phoenix, Mayor Mark Freeman of Mesa, and Mayor Corey Woods of Tempe will all be taking an active role by delivering keynote addresses on each day of the festival. Mayor Gallego of Phoenix expressed her support for the festival, saying,

"The SkyFire Environmental Film Festival reflects leadership by bringing art, science, and community. It raises awareness of global environmental solutions and connects them to local action. Their [SkyFire's] commitment to hosting a zero-waste event shows how creativity and responsibility can go hand-in-hand. I commend them for being a part of this work and for using storytelling to build a more sustainable future."

Since film submissions opened in November of 2025, directors from across the globe have submitted their films to the festival. From North America to Asia and Europe to Africa, this festival represents a truly international and cross-generational filmmaking community. It will feature films from emerging young directors to experienced documentarians, all of whom share passions for storytelling, culture, social issues, and environmental themes. These films will consist of narrative shorts, documentary shorts, and documentary features. An official list of all the finalists to be featured at the festival will be announced at the beginning of March.

The diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and creative approaches shown in these films reflect both local realities and global challenges faced in environmental activism and education. When asked how the festival will aid in fighting these battles Dr. Joe Roselle, Chief Operating Officer of Urban Farming Education (UFE), stated:

“Up until now these challenges have been battled in isolation, leading to duplicative efforts with short-term results. Urban Farming Education conceived this festival as a unifying activity with film being the common language to bring people and organizations together across borders, elevate multiple voices, and tell interconnected stories. By breaking down siloed sustainability efforts and fostering dialogue between filmmakers, educators, nonprofits, industry leaders, and communities, the festival aims to help build a more collaborative, inclusive, and globally connected sustainability movement.”

Urban Farming Education, a prominent local nonprofit advancing food systems and STEM education rooted in sustainability, is utilizing the SkyFire Film Festival to launch this movement. The festival serves as a blueprint for others on transforming independent ideation into community-centered activation. Themes and ideas from the films will come to life off the screen through public transit partnerships, zero-waste initiatives, and service projects. The festival is working with regional transit partners so audiences can move between venues using sustainable public transportation, thus reducing emissions while increasing accessibility for students and community members who may not otherwise attend. In parallel, zero-waste initiatives are embedded into festival operations through waste diversion, composting, and responsible materials use, so sustainability is not just discussed on screen but experienced in real time. Ultimately, these elements of the festival will set new zero-waste and accessibility standards for events across the region, country, and world. The learnings from this festival will be available to the public at SkyFireFF.org so future conventions, festivals, and public events can replicate and expand on what is being modeled.

The SkyFire Environmental Film Festival will take place from March 27th through the 29th, 2026, at venues across Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa. In addition to screening finalist films, there will be filmmaker Q&A sessions, a filmmaker pitch session, keynote addresses from the mayors of Phoenix, Mesa, and Tempe, a pub crawl, and, to cap the weekend off, a brunch crawl. To reserve your tickets, submit a film, or learn more about the festival, please visit SkyFireFF.org.

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About Urban Farming Education:

Urban Farming Education (UFE) creates strong, sustainable systems that help communities grow food, use resources wisely, and connect STEM education to real-life solutions—built on the unique needs and strengths of each place they work. Their team chooses to do this work because they see the urgent need for a new approach. The current systems—whether in education, agriculture, or environmental policy—are not working. Instead of fitting into these outdated models, they are building something different: an integrated, community-driven movement that aligns education, agriculture, and sustainability to create measurable, lasting impact.