

**Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project**

**Film Screening and Community Education Event**

***How to plan and execute a film screening for one or more films about***

***Pennsylvania’s rich conservation legacy***

**Creating Your Event**

**Decide on Your Goal and Target Audience**

1. What do you hope to achieve with your screening?

* Generate a lively post-film discussion with your audience about one person’s impact on the conservation and progressive movement?
* Explore the conservation heritage of the state or your local area?
* Focus on ways to mobilize your community to support of a variety of environmental causes and efforts?
* Simply provide an opportunity for community members to watch and learn together?

2. Who do you want to reach as an audience?

* Members of a particular group or several partner groups?
* People who would be more likely to take action on a community initiative?
* The general community?

Once you have defined your target audience and objectives, you can begin planning the event:

**Preliminary Planning: at least 8 weeks prior to event**

* Book the venue and date for your screening. Check with the venue about equipment available or you that will have to furnish. You’ll either need a DVD player and a large TV or a DVD player, projector, screen and sound system, or internet access for streaming.
* Recruit organizational members or partners to broaden your reach. Create a list of any partner organizations who can provide information at your event and that may be interested in getting involved with the topic.
* Identify roles for any partner organizations. Examples include publicity, speaker coordination, exhibit coordinator, and reception planning.
* Decide if you want speakers or a panel. A guest speaker to follow the film or a few panelists answering questions can add greatly to the overall experience and may also draw more people to the event. If you choose to invite speakers, the following points may help guide your thinking:
* Who do you want to invite? Are you after just one speaker or several? (See list of possible speakers at the end of each fact sheet about the conservation pioneer.)
* Who is available? Would you consider changing the date of your event in order to involve a specific speaker?
* What sort of briefing beforehand are you going to give your speakers?
* Will they be able to speak about anything they like or are you wanting them to respond to questions from a moderator or audience members?
* Who is going to moderate the discussion?
* How long will the speakers be able to talk? Do you need a timekeeper? Do you need special equipment, such as a microphone or podium?
* Will you provide an honorarium to speakers or will you ask them to donate their time? Will they be able to sell a product (for example, can an author sell a book.)

Make arrangements early with any speakers you will have, especially if they must travel to the event. Will they need a mileage reimbursement or stipend in order to attend?

**Logistical Planning: 4-6 weeks prior to event**

* Secure catering or decide on refreshments.
* Confirm that you have the right equipment to screen the documentaries.
* Draft agenda with partners.

SAMPLE PROGRAM

* Complete event approximately 90 minutes total
* 20 minutes before start of event: guests arrive, sign in, enjoy refreshments
* 5 minutes: emcee/host welcomes audience. Thank any supporters, make introductions, explain the plan for the evening
* 30 minutes: film screening
* 2-minute audience stand up stretch break while speaker(s) get ready
* Introduce speaker(s)
* 20-25 minutes: speaker presentation, panel discussion or Q&A
* 5 minutes: closing comments, thank supporters again, thank volunteers and everyone for coming
* Networking and refreshments, photo taking, talking with reporters

**Get the Word Out: 4 – 6 weeks prior to the event**

Electronic Outreach

* Email, social networking, messaging sites and blogs are some effective ways to reach people in your community. This type of approach works best when combined with publicity.
* An Internet search will turn up lots of tips for using social media to help promote your event. Here are a couple of examples:

<http://wiredimpact.com/library/social-media-nonprofit-events/>

<http://jcsocialmarketing.com/2014/09/promote-nonprofit-event-using-facebook/>

* Contact community calendars about your event. Some require several months’ notice, while others can be posted electronically at any time.
* Create an email blast to publicize your event electronically to your list with “hold the date.” Plan on sending another announcement 2 weeks prior.
* Schedule your date with the Conservation Heritage Project for inclusion on their electronic calendar.

Local Outreach

Before reaching out to media, spend time thinking about who is most likely to understand and appreciate your event, and consider what they listen to, read and watch on TV. Knowing your core audience helps you decide where to focus your efforts. It might mean promoting through local groups to whom they may belong, such as conservation, civic or religious organizations. Alternative weekly papers that concentrate on community initiatives might reach some audiences better than the daily newspaper focused on headline and celebrity news. AM radio stations are often more focused on community news than the FM rock music stations, and many local TV stations have morning or noon shows focused on community news. Contact the producers or hosts of these shows to make a guest appearance.

**Check in With Speakers: 2 weeks prior to event**

Let them know the details about the agenda and expectations you have of them. Make sure they have directions to the location and the time you need them to arrive. Ask them for a short biography and if there is anything they need from you. If you have prepared questions for them, share the questions to assist them in understand expectations.

**Media Outreach: 10 days prior to event**

* Send out press releases to media outlets:
* For a list of media outlets in your area: www.abyznewslinks.com/unite.htm
* For a list of newspapers by state: www.refdesk.com/paper.html
* Follow up with calls to local television and radio programs. Be sure to invite local reporters to the event itself as well as for follow up stories.
* Create and distribute flyers, postcards, posters, etc. to publicize your screening. Post notices on social media. Refresh these as needed.

**Final Planning: Several days prior**

* Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story.
* Finalize agenda. Make copies of handouts, fact sheets, etc.
* Send final round of email and social media blasts with any additional information that might give incentive to those who are undecided.
* IMPORTANT: Test your equipment with the film and view your copy of the film in its entirety to make sure there aren’t any glitches.
* Be sure that the screen will be large enough and high enough so that everyone can see. Sometimes a blank wall works better than a portable screen.

**At the Event**

* Provide a table for handouts that you or speakers want to distribute and tables for partner groups to set up exhibits
* Provide refreshments before and/or after to promote social interaction between audience members
* Have speakers sit in the audience to view the film
* Provide a short stretch break for audience members while speakers get organized up front
* Have a podium or table and chairs for panelists following the screening
* If you have a table of panelists, include tent name cards that audience members can read
* Provide water for the speaker(s)
* Have a timekeeper seated in front of the panelists/speakers so they can remind speakers of time left or if they are running over. Having a discreet sign to hold up (8.5”x11”) in front of the timekeeper that says in large letters “2 minutes” or “Wrap Up” is helpful to encourage speakers to complete their remarks.
* Have information about your group and upcoming programs available
* If you have volunteer opportunities, capture names of those in attendance who might be interested in becoming more involved in your organization

For more information about the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project, visit paconservationheritage.org or email paconservationheritage@gmail.com.

Ideas for Questions to a Speaker or Panelists

Below are a sampling of questions to provide some ideas for creating your own questions for a speaker or set of panelists. Consider the speaker’s background and interests to ensure the speaker can provide an interesting response for the audience. These questions are for the three films currently available from the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, as part of the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project.

**Mira Lloyd Dock**

Does her story have any parallels today?

Do the issues she fought in Pennsylvania in the early 1900s (child labor, women’s oppression, women’s rights, basic sewage disposal, clean drinking water, proper disposal of trash, rural deforestation) bring to mind similar situations in our country or around the world today?

Have we solved the problems she was fighting (in our community, in our state, or in this country)?

If she was alive today, what conservation or social issues do you think she would be tackling?

What do you find most inspiring about her story?

Did you find anything surprising in her story?

What lessons can we pass along to today’s generation about social change?

What are the pressing issues in our part of the state today?

What can audience members do in their communities to carry on the legacy of Mira Lloyd Dock?

What can each of us do to help our communities become better places to live?

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**Ralph Abele**

How does Ralph Abele’s mantra of “Resource First” relate to issues of today?

What issues do you think should receive more attention by our elected officials or environmental agencies?

What do you think are the pressing environmental issues of today that people should be more concerned about and should receive more media attention?

Providing young people with meaningful outdoor experiences was a high priority for Ralph throughout his life. What can we do to promote or support more of that today?

If Ralph was alive today, what issues do you think he would be tackling?

What do you find most interesting or inspiring about his story?

What lessons can we pass along to today’s generation about how to become involved in protecting or restoring our environment?

What are the pressing environmental issues in our area or elsewhere in our state today?

What can audience members do in their communities to carry on the legacy of Ralph Abele?

What can each of us do to help our communities and watersheds to be healthier for wildlife and people?

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**Gifford Pinchot**

If Gifford was alive today, what forest-related issue do you think he would be concerned about?

Gifford was a proponent of using public forests for multiple purposes – providing there was “the greatest good for the greatest number for the long run. Would he have concern about how our forests are being utilized today?

Could we use a program like the Civilian Conservation Corps today?

If Gifford Pinchot was governor of Pennsylvania today, what issues do you think he would be tackling? (Or would Cornelia Bryce be running for governor?)

What do you find most interesting or inspiring about his and Cornelia’s story?

What lessons can we pass along to today’s generation about how to become involved in protecting or restoring our environment?

What are the pressing environmental issues in our area or elsewhere in our state today?

What can audience members do in their communities to carry on the legacy of Gifford Pinchot?

What can each of us do to help our communities and/or forests to be healthier for wildlife and people?