

Sailing for Sustainability: Maine Filmmaker Begins Sailboat Film Tour

How A Maine Filmmaker is Making an Impact

BELFAST, MAINE, US, July 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Belfast resident James Merkel is embarking on an unconventional project—spreading an important message of sustainability through a unique film tour conducted solely by sailboat and electric vehicle, without fossil fuels.

Author, sailor, and avid bicyclist, Merkel discovered his passion for sustainability early on, contrasting sharply with his previous work developing military systems for the US government. Witnessing diverse cultures and values furthered his desire to showcase the many solutions available, accessible, and in practice today.



Saving Walden's World is a documentary film that explores sustainable lifestyles in foreign countries.

“

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Jim Merkel

Setting Sail Along Maine's Rugged Coast

Combining his love for sailing with a film tour was a natural decision. "As I gained acceptance into Maine's film festivals I dreamed of sailing with the film to ports up and down the coast," Merkel explains. "Some of Maine's most beautiful theaters answered our call. It also became clear that this film amplifies the work of the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals. There are these 2030 targets for 17 goals, however, our film documents societies decades ahead, making life better for people and the planet. Filming these tangible solutions globally and now sharing them on the big screen by the power of the wind fulfills a yearning – to not throw in the towel on my son's future.”

A Life Dedicated to Making a Difference

Since witnessing the devastating Exxon Valdez spill in 1989, Merkel has committed himself to minimizing his environmental footprint and inspiring others to do the same. He transitioned into environmental activism and served as Dartmouth College's Sustainability Director for several

years.

Saving Walden's World—The Film Supported by an Earthwatch Gaia Fellowship, Merkel explored sustainable living in Kerala, India, and the Himalayas. In 1995, he co-founded the Global Living Project, laying the groundwork for his film. Merkel's firsthand observations of climate change effects spurred him to document cultures achieving significant carbon footprint reductions while advancing healthcare and education access.

Expanding on this vision, Merkel journeyed to Slovenia, Cuba, and Kerala again, creating a film that celebrates these cultures' successes rather than highlighting their shortcomings. "What was so unusual is that people [in these countries] are used to Americans coming there to tell them they're doing something wrong," Merkel reflects. "I was asking about their successes—and people really lit up."

The film Saving Walden's World showcases these sustainable alternatives, draws parallels to women's empowerment and reproductive rights, and underscores our collective capacity for social justice—a vision intensified by Merkel's experience as a parent. "Solutions are possible. A better world is possible," he asserts. "We, as adults, must leave a better world for our children, not simply assume they'll figure it out." Maine and Beyond...

Each screening along the tour will spotlight one of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, culminating in New York City during Climate Week and the UN Summit of the Future in September.

See "Saving Walden's World" at These Maine Screenings and Festivals:
July 28: Maine Outdoor Film Festival, Portland, MD



Saving Walden's World showcases sustainable solutions in Kerala, India, Slovenia and Cuba.



Maine's rugged coast offers beautiful sailing and a host of historic towns and arthouse theatres.

August 4: The Strand, Rockland, ME
August 11: Vacationland Film Festival, Biddeford, ME
August 13: First Parish Church, Yarmouth, ME
August 17: Harbor Theatre, Boothbay Harbor, ME
August 26: Alamo Theatre, Bucksport, ME
September 1: Criterion Theatre, Bar Harbor, ME
September 8: St. Andrews Film Society, St. Andrews, NB
October 9: McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL

Watch the film trailer and get tickets at SavingWaldensWorld.org

"This film will stir your heart." —Vicki Robin, Author, Social Innovator

"Jim Merkel offers a special mix of practicality and idealism; a workable mix." —Bill McKibben, Climate Activist, Author

"As a former engineer working on weapons who went through a dramatic change in consciousness, his words have a special power." —Howard Zinn, author of A People's History of the United States

Saving Walden's World thanks its sponsors: McHenry County College, Sierra Club Maine Chapter, Mabel Wadsworth Center, Alliance for Sears Island, Maine Film Association, UN Kerala Forum, UpStream Watch, Maine Media, Friends of Harriet L. Hartley Conservation Area, Peace and Justice Group of Waldo County, Midcoast Maine Earth Protectors, WERU FM

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