



IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide



IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

“A moving tribute to our field”

—Judy Braus, Executive Director, NAAEE



Acknowledgments



How can nature help heal the divides shaping America today? What if environmental education were seen not as a luxury, but as essential—to mental health, civic connection, and strong, resilient communities? And what happens when people of all ages—no matter their background, experience, or political perspective—are given the chance to connect with the nature that connects us all?

In Our Nature explores these questions through the voices of changemakers who are using nature to bridge divides and reimagine what it means to belong—to one another and to the world around us.

This film is directed and produced by **James Parker**, whose vision, artistry, and commitment bring these stories to life. Deep gratitude to co-producer **Juliet Grable** for her creativity, insight, and unwavering partnership throughout the film’s journey.



Left to right: Nick Johnson, Field Producer, James Parker, Producer and Director, Quilen Blackwell, Founder, Southside Blooms, and Juliet Grable, Co-Producer.

This film was made possible by a generous grant from the Elizabeth G. Maughan Charitable Foundation.

ELIZABETH G. MAUGHAN
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

We extend heartfelt thanks to all the people and communities featured in *In Our Nature* for opening their hearts and sharing their stories. And to the countless **educators, mentors, and advocates** who, every day, help people connect with nature and with each other and who champion the field of environmental education—you are the inspiration behind this work.

Developed in association with the **North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)**, *In Our Nature* reflects NAAEE’s mission to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement to create a more just, healthy, and sustainable future through the power of education. Special thanks to Esther Cowles and Diane Lill for their thoughtful contributions to this discussion guide, which highlights the essential role of environmental education in connecting people and nature.

Learn More

Visit inournaturemovie.com to join the screening tour mailing list, view the trailer, and access press and outreach materials.



Explore the *In Our Nature* page at naaee.org/our-nature for activities and additional background information and resources, as well as ways to take action to support environmental education and equitable access to nature.



For everyone working to reconnect people and planet—through stories, through education, and through community



From Chicago's South Side to the rich forests of Kentucky to the banks of the San Antonio Riverwalk—the film reveals how environmental education and the connection to nature can heal, inspire, and unite.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Imagine a world where every person grows up with a deep connection to nature—and carries that connection into the way they learn, live, and lead. *In Our Nature*, the new award-winning documentary, invites us to reimagine education and community through the power of the natural world.

Whether you're hosting a screening, leading a panel, or simply gathering friends and colleagues for a conversation, this discussion guide is designed to help you spark discussions that matter and inspire actions to create healthier communities. It centers nature-based experiences and learning within the larger context of environmental education as a way to address today's pressing social, environmental, and economic challenges.

This guide is designed for local, state, and regional leaders in education, as well as others interested in sharing the power of nature and learning to create a better future for all. We hope that screening this new film will support your efforts to broaden your networks and deepen your connections with people and organizations who share your values and vision.

About the Film

The environment is at the heart of everything we do. It feeds us, inspires us, and keeps our communities and economies thriving. It shapes our cultures and identities, and it's where many of us find a sense of belonging. And as more and more research shows, spending time in nature isn't a luxury—it's essential for our health, our well-being, and our connections to one another.

In Our Nature is a 60-minute documentary exploring how nature-based education is helping us reconnect in a time of rising loneliness, disconnection, and division. Told through three deeply personal stories—from Chicago's South Side to the rich forests of Kentucky to the banks of the San Antonio Riverwalk—the film reveals how environmental education and the connection to nature can heal, inspire, and unite. Through these stories of resilience and reconnection, the film reveals why nature belongs at the heart of what it means to be truly human.

The film makes it clear: spending time in nature—and learning through nature—comes with huge benefits. These experiences are at the heart of environmental education, which takes the best of outdoor learning and pairs it with proven teaching strategies in classrooms, communities, and beyond. Together, they build the knowledge and skills we need—like critical thinking and problem-solving—to take on today's environmental challenges. Just as important, they inspire people of all ages to get involved and work toward healthier, more connected communities.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

About Environmental Education

Environmental education has the power to transform lives and society. It informs and inspires. It influences attitudes. It motivates action.

It's impossible not to be deeply concerned about the unprecedented environmental, social, and economic challenges we face as a global society—from climate change and loss of species and habitats to declines in civic engagement, decreasing access to nature, a growing gap between the haves and have-nots, and other threats to our health, security, and future survival.

Environmental education is more than appreciating time in nature. It is a process that helps individuals, communities, and organizations learn more about the environment and develop skills and understanding about how to address local to global challenges. Environmental education is a key tool in expanding the constituency for creating healthier and more civically engaged communities.

The modern field of environmental education builds on a rich history of research and practice, as well as core values of stewardship, justice, innovation, and other ideals that have been passed down through generations and cultures around the world. The field has continued to evolve, responding to international efforts to address environmental and social challenges, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Greening Education Partnership.

The field of environmental education is characterized by key underpinnings, including a focus on learners of all ages—from early childhood to seniors. It focuses on the importance of experiential, interdisciplinary education. It also helps all learners develop skills in problem-solving, decision-making, civic engagement, and creating a more inclusive and equitable society.



IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Key Underpinnings of Environmental Education

These foundational themes tend to be universal to our collective understanding of quality environmental education, though different communities may describe them differently.

Human Well-Being: Human well-being is inextricably linked with environmental quality. Humans are part of the natural order. Humans and the systems they create—societies, political systems, economies, religions, cultures, and technologies—impact the environment and, in turn, are affected by it. Since humans are a part of nature rather than outside it, they are challenged to recognize the ramifications of their interdependence with Earth systems.

Importance of Where One Lives: Beginning close to home, environmental education helps learners connect with, explore, and understand their immediate surroundings. It also allows learners to appreciate the natural world around them, wherever they live. The sensitivity, knowledge, and skills needed for this local connection to both the natural and built environments provide a base for moving into larger systems, broader issues, and an expanding understanding of connections and consequences.

Integration and Infusion: Disciplines from the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities are interconnected through the environment and environmental issues. Environmental education offers opportunities to integrate disciplinary learning, fostering a deeper understanding of concepts and skills. Environmental education works best when infused across the disciplines rather than treated as a separate or isolated experience.

Providing Access for All: Environmental education is welcoming, respects all learners, and embraces the principles of fairness and justice. Environmental education is designed to employ and engage people with different backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and perspectives through culturally relevant and responsive instruction. Environmental education actively works to create equitable learning opportunities and promotes the dignity and worth of people from all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, income levels, language groups, marital statuses, ages, geographic locations, and philosophical perspectives.



Lifelong Learning: Environmental education emphasizes critical and creative thinking, decision making, communication, and collaborative learning. The development and ongoing use of a broad range of skills and practices are essential for active and meaningful learning, both in school and throughout a lifetime.

Roots in the Real World: Learners develop knowledge and skills through direct experience with their community, the environment, society, and current issues. Investigation, analysis, and problem solving are essential activities and most effective when relevant to learners' lives and rooted in their experiences.

Sustainable Future: Supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, learning reflects on the past, examines the present, and is oriented to the future. Learning focuses on environmental, social, and economic responsibility as drivers of individual, collective, and institutional choices.

Systems and Systems Thinking: Systems thinking helps make sense of a large and complex world. A system is made up of parts. Each part can be understood separately. The whole, however, is understood only by examining the relationships and interactions among the parts. Earth is a complex system of interacting physical, chemical, and biological processes. Organizations, communities of animals and plants, living cells, and families can all be understood as systems. And systems can be nested within other systems.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Three Central Themes

At its core, environmental education connects our hearts and minds through meaningful learning experiences in and about our natural and built environments. These three themes in the film are central to the field.



1. Environmental education contributes to healthier communities for all.

Each of our communities is a system—or a system of systems. From the natural systems that sustain us (e.g., water, air, soil), to the social systems that nurture our well-being (e.g., educational, spiritual, interpersonal relationships), to governmental and economic systems that shape our lives (e.g., military and veterans, land use policy), no element of community exists in isolation. Understanding these interconnected systems is critical for creating healthy, sustainable, and resilient communities. The film challenges us to consider ways that environmental education can reach beyond nature experiences to encompass civic engagement, community development, economic prosperity, social and emotional well-being, and more.

2. Environmental education connects people not just to nature, but also to one another.

Environmental education allows us to recognize that we're all part of larger systems within our communities and the world. It offers a bridge to acknowledge our interdependence and see beyond the things that divide us. Throughout the film, we are introduced to stories of how nature brings people from diverse backgrounds together and how our connections to the land lead us to each other. The film invites us to consider the social benefits of sharing nature and its role in strengthening empathy, healing us both physically and emotionally, and promoting a better understanding of our world.



“When you work in the field of environmental education, you see that people are most at home when connected to the natural world and that’s why I think we feel lonely when we are not in our home; we feel a kind of homesickness.”

—Mary Ford, *Jane Goodall’s Roots & Shoots*

3. Environmental education helps to restore mental health.

Grief, loss, and injustice are themes throughout the film as we meet young people and adults from across the country who find relief and solace from spending time in nature. The film explores how nature is a powerful tool for healing individuals and communities.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Planning and Promoting Your Screening Event



Who to Invite

In Our Nature demonstrates the power of nature to transcend what so often divides us and foster meaningful connections with people and communities outside our usual circles. We encourage you to host screenings with audiences that represent different ages and varied interests to generate intergenerational and cross-disciplinary discussion (i.e., modeling the idea of nature and environmental education as a connector). We have so much to learn from one another; we see this film as an inspiring medium to expand and deepen our connections to one another.

Where to Host

In the spirit of building and expanding our connections, we encourage you to host screenings in community settings that are safe and welcoming to all. These may be local theaters, schools, places of worship, community centers, your own workplace, and more. All you will need is access to wi-fi, a screen or blank wall, and comfortable seating.

Accessing the Film

Screenings for Educators and Nonprofits

(Schools, NAAEE Affiliates, Nature Centers, Zoos, Aquariums, etc.)

1. Submit a screening request at inournaturemovie.com.
2. If approved, you'll receive an email confirming the details of your screening.
3. Once confirmed, we'll send you a secure streaming link to the film along with educator resources.
4. The film will be available for 48 hours around the date and time indicated in your screening request.

Screenings for Other Audiences (starting in early 2026)

(For Profit, Government, Community Organization, etc.)

1. Submit a screening request at inournaturemovie.com.
2. After reviewing your screening request, an email with a link to the *In Our Nature* page on the Kinema film distribution platform will be sent to the primary contact identified on the request form. Then take these steps:

From this link, click "Create Screening Event."

- Select "In-Person" or "Virtual," depending on your preference.
- Select the appropriate licensing option.
- Select "Public" or "Private." Public screenings will be promoted on our website and private screenings will only be accessible with a link you send to your guests.
- Select what best describes you as an organization.
- Enter your screening details.
- Click "Submit." You'll receive a confirmation email and the Kinema team will review the details of your request for approval. You'll receive a response within two days.
- (Optional): Customize your event page by editing your Event Title and Organization Name, adding a Logo, and editing the copy on the Event Page.

For further details on hosting an in-person screening, visit [Create an In-Person Screening](#) in the Kinema Help Center.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Technology Checklist

Before scheduling a screening, ensure you have the necessary technology to support your event, including the following. It's also important to test your set up at least three days before the event to prevent last-minute issues.

Here's a list of what you will need:

- Laptop
- Speakers
- HDMI/VGA adapters (Mac & PC-compatible)
- Portable projector
- Screen or blank white wall space
- Extension cords and power strips

Note: It's always helpful when someone with a technology background is available to provide support during the screening.

Getting the Word Out

Be creative in how you spread the word so that you reach beyond your usual networks and welcome new faces. Use standard outreach methods, such as email and social media, while also pursuing local media coverage. Pre-release screenings of the film in Chicago and Lexington generated terrific local media coverage that both increased attendance at the screenings and raised public awareness about the issues for those unable to attend.

Here's a sample screening invitation and sample social media posts:

Hello,

I'm excited to invite you to a special screening of In Our Nature, a new documentary from filmmakers James Parker and Juliet Grable, in partnership with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE).

This powerful film explores how connecting people with nature—and with each other—can help us bridge divides and find solutions to the pressing challenges we face today. Through moving stories and inspiring voices, In Our Nature shows the extraordinary impact of environmental education and the power it has to create healthier communities and a more sustainable future.

You can watch the trailer here:
www.inournaturemovie.com

We'll be gathering for the screening on [DATE] at [TIME] at [LOCATION], followed by a discussion where we can share reflections and ideas about how these stories connect to our own lives and work.

Please invite friends, family, colleagues, or anyone who might be inspired by this vital film. To help with planning, RSVP to [NAME/email].

[Optional: Light refreshments will be provided. / You're welcome to bring your own food and drink.]

I hope you'll join us for this opportunity to see the power of education—and the power of nature—in action.

Warmly,

Sample Social Media Posts:

- Don't miss *In Our Nature*—a moving new film about the power of education and nature to bring people together and spark change.
Screening on [Date] at [Location]!
Details & RSVP: [link]
@thenaar, @synchronous.tv
- Join us for a screening of *In Our Nature*, a powerful new documentary that explores how environmental education connects us, inspires us, and helps us build a more sustainable future.
[Date] [Time] [Location]
RSVP: [link]
@thenaar, @synchronous.tv



IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide



Planning Your Agenda

A successful screening will allow time for participants to engage in meaningful dialogue with one another and identify actions to take. Here's a suggested agenda.

1. Welcome your audience and introduce the film (10 minutes)

Briefly introduce the purpose of the film and your goals in hosting the screening. Introduce your panelists and recognize any other special guests. Invite everyone to stay for the discussion following the screening. Let folks know how long you expect the event to last.

2. View the film (60 minutes)

3. Host a panel and community discussion (30 minutes)

See page 10 for information on assembling a panel to foster constructive discussion about the value of environmental education and connecting to nature. Discussion questions are provided for both panelists and the audience.

4. Suggest opportunities for audience members to take action (10 minutes)

Make and distribute copies of the Call to Action handout (see page 12) to instigate effective actions that support environmental education and access to nature for all.

5. Closing (5 minutes)

Thank people for coming. Refer them to the *In Our Nature* page on [NAAEE's website](#) for activity ideas and additional resources, including those listed at the end of this guide. Invite them to sign up for more information from your organization, as well as to learn about other ways to stay informed and involved.

Measuring Impact

Post-Event Survey

After the film, we encourage you to project a simple slide with a QR code that links to a survey, allowing audience members to submit feedback, reactions, or any other insights. This slide will be available on the Kinema page.

Media to Capture/Send

- Photos or short video clips
- Attendance: Approximate number of students, teachers, or community members who attended.
- Feedback or quotes: Any student or educator reactions you'd like to share.

Please share your impact materials (attendance numbers, quotes/feedback, and any photos or short clips) by emailing impact@synchronous.tv



IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Engage Your Audience and Foster Connections

Put Together a Great Panel and Discussion

By hosting a panel discussion after the screening, you can foster meaningful dialogue about the themes raised in the film. In the spirit of bridging divides that is central to the film, we encourage you to include three to five panel members who bring different points of view and life experiences. These may be environmental educators, school administrators, faculty, elected officials, veteran groups, farmers and ranchers, conservationists, and more. You will also want to include a trusted individual to serve as the host and facilitator for the panel discussion.

Below are discussion questions, organized by theme, for both panelists and audience members. You may choose to use them as is or modify them to better fit the needs and priorities of your community and audience. The more you can localize the conversation, the better it is for strengthening and advancing environmental education in your location.

Discussion Questions by Theme

1. Environmental education contributes to healthier communities for all.

Each of our communities is a system—or a system of systems. From the natural systems that sustain us (e.g., water, air, soil), to the social systems that nurture our well-being (e.g., educational, spiritual, interpersonal relationships), to governmental and economic systems that shape our lives (e.g., military and veterans, land use policy), no element of community exists in isolation. Understanding these interconnected systems is critical for creating healthy, sustainable, and resilient communities. The film challenges us to consider ways that environmental education can reach beyond nature experiences to encompass civic engagement, community development, economic prosperity, social and emotional well-being, and more.

Discussion Questions for Panelists

- The film introduces us to programs that are very intentional about using connections to nature to build community. **How can people's connections to nature be a driver for strengthening the health, sustainability, and resilience of your community?**

- Quilen states that, "Nature and environmental education, when paired with economics, have the power to really transform neighborhoods from the bottom up in gigantic ways." The story of Southside Blooms is an excellent example of an approach to environmental education that is centered on providing urban communities, and youth in particular, with economic prosperity. **What local programs and organizations offer (urban) youth opportunities to marry economic incentives, careers, and environmental stewardship?**
- The Red Oaks Forest School in Kentucky is valued for serving students who are not best served by traditional learning structures. **How are our local schools, nature centers, and informal educational programs using environmental education to meet the needs of all types of learners? What more can be done?**

Discussion Questions for Audience

- How have your experiences with nature influenced your personal environmental ethic?
- Where do you see opportunities to strengthen and expand environmental education for all learners in your community?
- How can nature and being outdoors be a gateway for community development, career development, and economic prosperity where you live?

2. Environmental education connects people not just to nature, but also to one another.

Each of our communities is a system—or a system of systems. Environmental education allows us to recognize that we're all part of larger systems within our communities and the world. It offers a bridge to acknowledge our interdependence and see beyond the things that divide us. Throughout the film, we are introduced to stories of how nature brings people from diverse backgrounds together and how our connections to the land lead us to each other. The film invites us to consider the social benefits of sharing nature and its role in strengthening empathy, healing us both physically and emotionally, and promoting a better understanding of our world.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Discussion Questions for Panelists

- Several speakers in the film grapple with the challenges of a society that is more divided and more disconnected from nature than ever before. **What bright spots do you see where people are forging meaningful connections with one another and with nature?**
- Griff states, “Clean air, clean soil, and clean water are the foundations of life... If you want to be Republican, Democrat, Socialist, whatever—be that with clean air, clean soil, and clean water—because you have to have it to continue being whatever you are being.” **What do you see as the opportunities and challenges to bridge our societal divides in politics, ideology, and other differences through the power of nature?**
- Jaime notes that “This is a time where facts, truth, and discernment have never been harder... At the heart of environmental education, it’s about raising awareness—yes—but also [developing] those critical thinking skills that have never been more important in our country than they are right now.” **What tips do you have for navigating complex differences and fostering critical thinking through your environmental education programming?**
- Ellen observed, “Children largely exist outside of politics. And how unfair it is, for children in particular, for environmental education to be politicized. Because effectively what it does is make their parents’ politics or their school’s politics or their community’s politics the dominant and deciding factor in whether kids will have access to nature.” **What are some strategies for depoliticizing environmental education?**

Discussion Questions for Audience

- Griff spoke about us shifting from outdoor people to indoor people. **How do you see this shift happening in your personal life or in your community?**
- Marquise described the significance of staying in his neighborhood and recruiting more youth into Southside Blooms as a means of showing a better way and making a real impact. **Can you think of a time when you experienced a feeling of being welcomed, valued, and part of a community while in nature? How do these experiences deepen your commitment to your community?**
- Jason noted, “There is this massive disconnection of kids being connected to other kids, of kids really receiving any kind of benefits of spending time outdoors—that means

exploring, being creative, being physical, getting our eyes off of a screen.” **For the young people in our audience, how does the film change the way you think about spending time in nature? What prevents you from spending (more) time outdoors with your friends now? How does each of us balance our screen time with our time in nature and with each other?**

3. Environmental education helps to restore mental health.

Grief, loss, and injustice are themes throughout the film as we meet young people and adults from across the country who find relief and solace from spending time in nature. The film explores how nature is a powerful tool for healing individuals and communities.

Discussion Questions for Panelists

- In the film, Amani values Southside Blooms as a safe space to discuss problems, come out of her shell, and form social connections. **How can we ensure that our environmental education programs create welcoming atmospheres for all students?**
- Jason describes the TAPS program in San Antonio as “creating this space for them where they associate nature with their own wellness, with being happy, and protected, and taken care of.” And family members described feeling closer to loved ones when they are in nature. **What other programs in our area support military survivors and other populations who have experienced trauma with the healing power of nature?**
- Sheila noted, “It can be really hard to raise children in a world where they’re not comfortable with discomfort. That’s true of them physically; it’s true of them emotionally; it’s true in their social relationships.” **How can we introduce more discomfort into our learning environments as a way to build greater resilience in our young people?**

Discussion Questions for Audience

- Dionta stated, “I’ve lived with anger my whole entire life.” And then he credited Southside Blooms with helping him develop patience, perseverance, anger management, and more. **How have you seen yourself or others be transformed by time in nature?**
- Working in environmental education and related fields can be a challenging endeavor. **What do you do to connect with nature and take care of yourself?**

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Call to Action

After watching *In Our Nature*, audience members will likely be motivated to take action. Here are some steps to support environmental education and ensure access to nature for all of us.

Everyone

- Discuss the film with family and friends.
- Advocate for expanded environmental education opportunities for all learners in formal and nonformal settings.
- Advocate for expanded access to nature for everyone. This can be on social media, during in-person conversations, or in your circles of influence at home, school, or work.
- Organize nature-centered activities in your community and support nature centers, zoos, aquariums, scouting programs, and other initiatives that connect people with nature and learning.
- Share your story with elected officials to help build a strong base of public support for environmental education and nature-centered learning. See the Share Your Story activity at <https://naaee.org/our-nature> for guidance on crafting and sharing a compelling story.
- Reconnect with nature personally. Spend more time outside, notice how it impacts your well-being, and become an example for others to follow.

School Teachers and Administrators

- Organize a film screening for your staff, school district, and/or community.
- Meet with colleagues to increase understanding of the benefits of environmental education.
- Integrate more environmental education and outdoor learning into your school or district curriculum.
- Designate an outdoor learning space on or near your school grounds.
- Support an environmental club at your school.
- Integrate nature into your work. Explore how nature and nature-based learning can be integrated into your community organizing, teaching, or social enterprise. Take inspiration from Southside Blooms and Red Oaks Forest School and consider how nature could become a framework for solving problems or reaching new audiences.

Environmental Education Organizations

- Organize a film screening for your staff and/or community.
- Use the activity *Analyze Your Environmental Education Programs* at <https://naaee.org/our-nature> to assess how well your programs address the film's three themes:
 1. Environmental education contributes to healthier communities for all.
 2. Environmental education connects people not just to nature, but also to one another.
 3. Environmental education helps to restore mental health.

Elected Officials and Policymakers

- Provide leadership, funding, and other resources to support environmental education and community green spaces, making nature accessible to all. This can include creating and maintaining accessible natural spaces, providing access for people from all parts of the community, and facilitating the conversion of vacant lots to support nature, youth development, and economic opportunities.
- Consult and collaborate with individuals and organizations that are already working—often quietly—to create a healthier, greener, and more equitable future for your community. See the *Highlight Heroes* activity at for guidance on shining a spotlight on those “heroes” and sharing their stories.
- Build bridges through conversation and engage in dialogue with people who hold different political or cultural perspectives around the importance of connecting future generations with nature. Begin with personal stories—moments of joy, healing, or connection outdoors—and focus on the common values we all share, such as clean air, clean water, and healthy soil.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide



Mary Ford

Mary Ford is vice president of Roots & Shoots USA, the youth program of the Jane Goodall Institute, where she works to empower young people to make a difference in their communities for people, other animals, and the environment we share. This work builds on Mary's experience in the education division of the

National Geographic Society, serving K-12 students and educators globally. Previously, she worked as Program Leader for Youth and Educators at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY, and Manager of Education at the national headquarters of the World Wildlife Fund and the National Audubon Society in Washington, DC. Mary has shared her expertise in environmental education through service on advisory boards at the San Diego Natural History Museum, BSCS Science Learning, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and as a former board chair of NAAEE.



Griff Griffith

Griff Griffith is a renowned nature interpreter and former host of Animal Planet's *Wild Jobs*. With over 30 years of hands-on experience—including fish and wildlife surveys, wildland firefighting, trail construction, commercial fishing, farming, and leading ecological restoration crews—Griff has dedicated his

life to understanding and protecting the natural world. Now, as an ecologically conscious social media expert, he shares his deep passion for wildlife and conservation, helping people connect with nature and coexist more harmoniously with it. A captivating public speaker, Griff has appeared on CNN, NBC Nightly News, The Kelly Clarkson Show, MTV, various documentaries, and numerous other media outlets, inspiring audiences with his knowledge and enthusiasm for conservation. Through his work with Jumpstart Nature, Redwoods Rising, and as a natural and cultural resource interpreter, he continues to make a meaningful impact on both people and the environment.



Ellen Prusinski

Ellen Prusinski is the Marlene & David Grisson Associate Professor of Education at Centre College. Ellen has worked in a variety of educational settings, including community organizations and policy institutions in the U.S., high schools and universities in China, and nongovernmental organizations in Indonesia.

Broadly, her research interests are in the intersections between politics and education; nonformal and community-based learning; and international education studies, particularly in Asia. She is especially interested in how community knowledge and values shape educational practices and how to increase access to environmental education, especially for underserved groups.



Richard Louv

Richard Louv is a journalist and author known for popularizing the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his book *Last Child in the Woods*. His work focuses on the importance of connecting people with nature for their health and happiness. He is a co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Children & Nature Network and

has written numerous books that have helped connect people, especially children, with nature and spend more time outside. He also serves as honorary co-chair of Canada's Child in Nature Alliance. Rich is a recipient of the Audubon Medal and has written for major publications like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Orion* magazine. Although he has written ten books and dozens of articles, he says he would rather hike than write.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Organizations Featured in the Film



Southside Blooms

<https://www.southsideblooms.com/>

Founded by Quilen and Hannah Blackwell, Southside Blooms is a non-profit farm-to-vase florist that was born out of compassion and a deep commitment to community well-being. Recognizing the untapped potential of vacant lots in underserved neighborhoods in Chicago, they grasped the opportunity not only to beautify these spaces but also to create employment opportunities for inner-city youth.



Red Oaks Forest School

<https://www.redoaksforestschool.org/>

Working across central and eastern Kentucky, Red Oaks Forest School promotes physical and mental health for children and teens by offering classes, trips, and other opportunities that allow them to connect with nature, build friendships, and develop environmental literacy through hands-on learning outdoors.



Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

<https://www.taps.org/>

A national organization providing compassionate care and comprehensive resources to all those grieving a death in the military or veteran community, TAPS offers a variety of programs to survivors nationally and worldwide, including the Good Grief Camp featured in the film.

Resources

A good starting point for additional resources is the *In Our Nature* site (<https://naaee.org/our-nature>) on the NAAEE website. It includes several activity ideas to support environmental education and increase access to nature for everyone, along with other information and resources.

NAAEE

<https://naaee.org>

For more than 50 years, NAAEE has harnessed the power of education to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement to create a healthier, more sustainable future. With more than 30,000 members and supporters in more than 50 countries, NAAEE is a trusted source of information, learning opportunities, resources, and more for educators, policy makers, and education advocates.

Discover the Forest

<https://discovertheforest.org/>

If you're just getting started in learning about the benefits of nature learning for young people, visit this site for activities, creative ideas, and a link to an interactive map for exploring parks, forests, and nature education resources near you.

Natural Start Alliance

<https://naturalstart.org/>

Join a network of educators, parents, nature preschools, and others committed to connecting young children to nature and the environment through education.

eeWORKS

<https://naaee.org/programs/eeworks>

Explore eight systematic research reviews that demonstrate the impact and value of environmental education, from civic engagement to conservation and academic achievement. eeWORKS is guided by an expert advisory board and led by NAAEE in partnership with Stanford University, University of California–Davis, and University of Florida.

NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence

<https://naaee.org/programs/guidelines-excellence>

This series of publications highlights effective practices in the field of environmental education, including guidelines on community engagement, early childhood programs, and professional development.

IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide

Children & Nature Network

<https://www.childrenandnature.org/>

The Children & Nature Network focuses on the benefits of nature to children and increasing safe and equitable access to the natural world for all. It mobilizes leaders, educators, activists, practitioners, and parents who seek to create healthier communities with opportunities for exploring and learning in nature.

Every Kid Outside

<https://everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm>

This partnership among federal land management agencies provides passes to fourth-grade students and their families for free access to national parks, forests, and other lands for a year. The site offers tips for planning your trip, places to stay, and what to bring.

Find and Contact Your Elected Officials

<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

Contact your elected representatives using this resource to find the names and contact information of the individuals who represent you at the federal, state, and local levels.

Justice Outside

<https://justiceoutside.org/>

Justice Outside supports grassroots leaders in sharing wisdom, co-creating strategies, and driving collective impact. Through policy change, trust-based funding, and community mobilization, they work to transform who has access to outdoor spaces, resources, and decision-making power.

Latino Outdoors

<https://latinooutdoors.org/>

A Latine-led organization that supports a national community of leaders in outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental education, Latino Outdoors inspires, connects, and engages Latino communities in the outdoors.

Nature Journaling

<https://www.wildwonder.org/activities/#getting-started>

Nature journaling can enhance mental health, alleviate stress and anxiety, and cultivate a mindful connection with nature. John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren, authors of *How to Teach Nature Journaling*, present 31 activities on this site that engage learners of all ages in nature journaling and outdoor learning. This site also includes a link to the *Nature Journal Connection*, a free educational video series created by

John Muir Laws in partnership with the Children's Creativity Museum. It contains 40 15-minute videos featuring fun and engaging activities that build the essential skills of a scientist, naturalist, artist, and observer.

Outdoor Afro

<https://outdoorafro.org/>

Outdoor Afro is a national organization that celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature and reconnects Black people to their lands, water, and wildlife through outdoor education, recreation, and conservation.

Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK)

<https://outdoorsallianceforkids.org/>

This national strategic partnership, comprising more than 100 businesses and nonprofit organizations from diverse sectors, supports efforts to connect children, youth, and families with the outdoors.

Park Rx America

<https://parkrxamerica.org/>

Park Rx America is dedicated to educating healthcare professionals and the public about the importance of spending time in nature as a crucial step in improving both human and planetary health. Visit this site to get started by writing your own prescription for nature.

The Umbrella Project

<https://umbrellaprojecthike.org/>

Designed for young adults grieving the loss of a close loved one, The Umbrella Project offers outdoor experiences that harness the power of nature to teach essential coping skills, self-awareness, and self-reliance, all crucial components of the healing process.





IN OUR NATURE

Film Discussion Guide



This Screening Guide was developed by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in collaboration with Synchronous Pictures.

© 2025 North American Association for Environmental Education.
All rights reserved.

© 2025 Synchronous Pictures, *In Our Nature*. All rights reserved.