

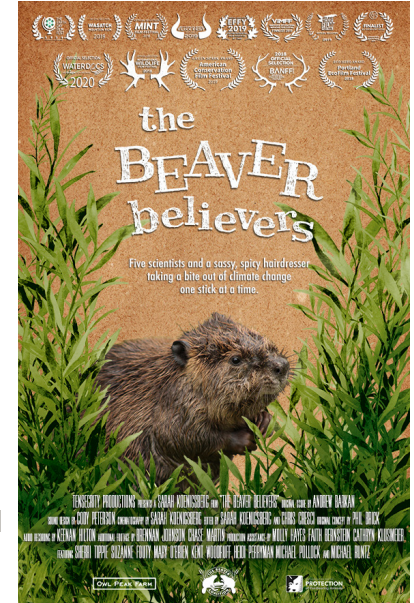


[www.thebeaverbelievers.com](http://www.thebeaverbelievers.com)

## FILM SYNOPSIS

Sometimes the best solutions to the biggest problems can be found in the most unexpected places. Meet the beaver believers: five scientists and a sassy, spicy hairdresser who are tackling climate change one stick at a time.

The Beaver Believers is the urgent yet whimsical story of an unlikely cadre of activists who share a common vision: restoring the North American Beaver, that most industrious, ingenious, bucktoothed engineer, to the watersheds of the arid West. The Beaver Believers encourage us to embrace a new paradigm for managing our western lands, one that seeks to partner with the natural world rather than overpower it. As a keystone species, beaver enrich their ecosystems, creating the complexity and resiliency our watersheds need to absorb the impacts of climate change. Beavers can show us the way and even do much of the work for us, if only we can find the humility to trust in the restorative power of nature and our own ability to play a positive role within it. Shot in 8 western US states, Mexico, and Canada, through desert drought, raging wild fires, spring floods, and wetland tranquility, this film will change the way you think about climate change and inspire you to step up to confront the challenges we face.



## ABOUT THE FILMMAKER



Sarah is an award-winning filmmaker, photographer, and educator whose work centers on stories of art, environment, and community in the American West. Her films and teaching cross disciplines, illuminating the power of storytelling as a medium through which to explore complex social, science, and policy issues. Since earning her BA in Environmental Studies and Politics at Whitman College in 2002, she has been inspired by the successes of place-based collaboratives, determined to facilitate that type of problem solving in public land use, watershed health, and climate issues. Sarah's film work has screened in festivals worldwide and for venues such as the National Climate Adaptation Forum and the North American Congress of Conservation Biology, while her photography has been featured in publications such as Science, High Country News, and the National Climate Assessment.

Her feature documentary *The Beaver Believers* has been honored with the Green Spark Award from the American Conservation Film Festival, has won multiple audience choice awards, and was a finalist in the Banff Mountain Film Festival, London Eco Film Festival, and the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival, among many others. In 2020 she was invited to become a member of the Her Wild Vision Initiative, the world's first comprehensive directory of female and female-identifying conservation filmmakers and photographers. Sarah regularly presents on science communication and storytelling for universities, land management agencies, and restoration practitioners, and she has developed multiple project curriculum and workshops in audio and video production for college and university students. Sarah is based in Walla Walla, Washington, where she runs Tensegrity Productions with the help of her canine Creative Director, Willow.

## CONNECT

Web: [www.thebeaverbelievers.com](http://www.thebeaverbelievers.com), [www.beavercoalition.com](http://www.beavercoalition.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thebeaverbelievers](http://www.facebook.com/thebeaverbelievers)

Instagram: @thebeaverbelievers

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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When I set out in search of the story for my first feature-length film, I knew I wanted it to be about climate change, but I didn't want to repeat the same apocalyptic "doom and gloom" narrative that we've all seen before. You know the one, with the depressingly unstoppable disasters, the melting glaciers and starving polar bears, where we leave the theatre feeling like crap because it's all our fault. That frame of catastrophic narrative is so often overwhelming to the point of being disempowering and debilitating, that it can be counter-productive to inciting action. I wanted to engage the topic of climate change through a different narrative, to find a story where climate change could be framed (dare I say it?) almost as an opportunity: as a motivating, inspiring impetus to jump into joyful action. And then I stumbled upon beavers.

On the surface, "The Beaver Believers" is all about these remarkable, adorable, little bucktoothed ecosystem engineers – how they are a keystone species, how they repair and expand riparian habitat, how they seem to counter nearly every negative impact of climate change from fires to floods – but at a deeper level, this film is about so much more. It's about the human spirit, about passionate people striving to make the world more resilient and robust, and remarkably, having a fantastic time as they do so! It's about realizing we have a place within the natural world, and that we have the capacity to be agents of good. It all boils down to what I call "Thinking Like a Beaver." When beavers move in to a watershed, they build their dams and ponds to take care of their own needs, but they do it in a way that simultaneously benefits all of the other creatures around them. We can apply this metaphor to our own lives and think, how can we take care of our needs in a way that simultaneously benefits, rather than detracts from, our community as a whole? How can we take care of ourselves in a way that creates opportunity for others, that promotes more biodiversity, more human diversity, more local economic growth, more sustainability? That is "thinking like a beaver," and our communities and watersheds would be all the more resilient and robust for our efforts.

As I've had the opportunity to share my work at film festivals, conferences, and universities across the last couple of years, at every screening I am awed by how profoundly moved the audience is. From the buzz of energy within a packed theatre, the collective laughter and cheering metered by silent moments of captivated focus; to the profoundly deep conversations I've had after in lobbies, pubs, and coffee shops; to the steady flow of emails I receive from folks looking to engage, to volunteer, to find resources to nurture their own creek/forest/farm; it is clear that people desperately want to discover and hold on to nuggets of hope – to feel like their actions can matter. That is what the movement of climate adaptation – and the story of "The Beaver Believers" – brings to an audience. Partnering with the natural world and each other is how we will heal. Thank you for watching.

-Sarah Koenigsberg, summer 2019