

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2010

VANCOUVER – The first annual Vancouver Festival of Ocean Films (VFOF), Canada’s only film festival dedicated to the issues, sports and personalities of the oceans, arrives in Vancouver on April 16 and 17 with a suite of new films guaranteed to inspire fascination and wonder with the sea.

The inaugural VFOF is proud to present two “World Premier”, one “North American Premiere” and four “Canadian Premiere” films. Included in the lineup is the recently released *Turtle: The Incredible Journey*, which will be presented in partnership with the **David Suzuki Foundation**.

“Turtles are a very precious – and in many places endangered – species on this planet,” said **Scott Wallace, sustainable fisheries analyst with the David Suzuki Foundation**. “We are excited to co-present a film that helps encourage a better understanding of why we need to protect them.”

Turtle: The Incredible Journey is a visually stunning feature film, directed by Nick Stringer and narrated by two-time Academy Award Nominee Miranda Richardson. This film documents the story of a little loggerhead turtle, as she follows in the path of her ancestors on one of the most extraordinary journeys in the natural world.

This year we will also be featuring keynote speaker, **Dr. Brian Keating**, head of conservation outreach at the Calgary Zoological Society, with a presentation entitled *The Aquatic Serengeti*. Brian Keating has travelled the worlds oceans, rainforests, jungles, alpine, deserts and tundra and will share the joy of discovery through a multi-media presentation covering both recreation and conservation all over the world. Brian has only recently returned from a journey south of the Antarctic Circle, his most recent foray onto the world’s oceans.

At VFOF, our goal is to inspire and stimulate people to explore their relationship with the ocean by showcasing local and international filmmakers and presenters. The festival will present exhilarating films featuring sports such as paddling and surfing, as well as inspiring films highlighting the ocean environment, culture and exploration. We aim to raise interest in and awareness of the ocean not only as a place for positive recreation, but also as an opportunity for conservation and sustainable commerce.

Sponsored by One Ocean Expeditions and Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, the Vancouver Festival of Ocean Films is also focused on making a positive contribution to the community. Fifty per cent of profits raised will be donated to the **Take a Hike Foundation**. We have also initiated a \$700 bursary that will challenge students to think and express themselves creatively on the ocean environment around them.

VFOF will be presented at 7 p.m. on April 16 and 17 at the Hollywood Theatre, 3123 West Broadway. Tickets are \$16 and are available at the door, at Sitka Surf and Skate Shop

(1864 West 4th Ave, Vancouver) and Deep Cove Outdoors (4310 Gallant Ave, North Vancouver).

For more information, visit www.vfof.ca or contact:

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Festival Program

***Friday April 16, 2010
7 p.m.***

Turtle: The Incredible Journey (UK), Nick Stringer, 80 min - Canadian Premiere

Presented in partnership with the David Suzuki Foundation

This visually stunning feature film is the story of a little loggerhead turtle, as she follows the path of her ancestors on one of the most extraordinary journeys in the natural world.

Born on a beach in Florida, she rides the Gulf Stream up towards the Arctic and ultimately swims around the entire North Atlantic across to Africa and back to the beach where she was born. But the odds are stacked against her; just one in ten thousand turtles survive the journey.

She faces many hazards – her siblings are lost in the doldrums of the Sargasso Sea and she comes face to face with creatures of the deep and nearly dies at the hands of fishermen. She travels up north but drifts from her life current, the Gulf Stream, into dangerously cold waters.

When she finally reaches the Azores on the other side of the Atlantic, she sees the greatest celebration of life on the Earth as sperm whales and baitballs explode from the water. But deep and powerful changes are happening in the oceans – the fish are disappearing, sea levels are rising, meaning the turtle's birthing beach could be washed away and bring a way of life to an end.

Then her calling comes, she must return to her beach. When she finally reaches the shores of Florida, 25 years will have passed!

Under a million stars, she crawls out of the sea to lay her own eggs and keeps the Turtle's Journey alive.

Turtle: The Incredible Journey has all the elements of a great epic: suspense, adventure, despair and hope.

Featured Presentation: The Aquatic Serengeti (Canada), Dr. Brian Keating, 60 min

A spirit-lifting journey into some of the planet's best ocean locations.

Brian Keating has been travelling the wilds of the world for over a quarter of a century, exploring some 50 countries on all seven continents. His passion for remote travel will be revealed in a way that only Brian can, with his buoyant method of story telling. Punctuated throughout with humour and personal anecdotes, he'll illustrate his presentation with live-narrated video segments.

Brian promises a journey to oceans near and far, into gin-clear tropical-ocean depths with unbelievable creatures, to remote northern fjords accessible only by kayak, and to places where the largest and most dramatic of the world's aquatic creatures live and thrive, leaving the observer overwhelmed with satisfaction. His stories, illustrated by dramatic filming, will serve to reconfirm the value of our collective understanding of the importance of wild places.

His presentation is designed to inspire and enthuse, offering hope for a better tomorrow.

Black People Don't Swim (South Africa), Lucilla Blankenberg, 48 min - North American Premiere

Cut to a beanie-clad comedian standing in a spotlight: "When white people dance, they swim. When black people swim, they drown." This documentary follows junior longboard champion Kwezi Qika during an episode in his life (literally). At 18 years old, Kwezi was South Africa's junior surfing champion. He was also the first black South African to ever win his country's most prestigious surfing tournament. This film investigates myth and stereotype, which is chucked into the trash, and hails the sacrifice made by his domestic worker mum.

***Saturday April 17, 2010
7 p.m.***

Red Gold (USA), Ben Knight & Travis Rummel, 55 min

Consider the future of Bristol Bay, Alaska; home to the world's two most prolific salmon runs. These rivers have supported a thriving fishing industry for thousands of years. Now, a proposed gold and copper mine at the river's headwaters threatens not only the fish, but a way of life. Winner of "Best Culture" award at the 2009 San Francisco Ocean Film Festival, amongst many others.

Harvester (California), Scott Walker, 15 min - Canadian Premiere

A cinematic ocean documentary that explores the variety of subtle differences that makes a California urchin diver's life so unique. We aim to plunge our audience into the culture of commercial urchin divers and see how they interact within their unique community, balancing work, family, and transition through an array of newly imposed environmental restrictions. The characters lead us past the traditional fishermen stereotypes, revealing the possible end of an era and creation of a new breed of environmentally conscious divers.

Runman's Groms: Lil Ray and his Friends (Hawaii), Ray Runman, 6 min - Canadian Premiere

Runman's latest film about Lil Ray the grom, other groms, and adults that act like groms. Winner of the Viewers Choice Award for Best Short at the 2009 New York Surf Film Festival.

Ocean Gybe (Canada), Andrew Naysmith, 5 min - World Premiere

In the summer of 2007, brothers Ryan and Bryson Robertson along with good friend Hugh Patterson began their dream and departed La Paz, Mexico on a three-year circumnavigation of the globe. They are surfers, sailors, and explorers. Their adventure is a voyage of exploration, research, and education. Their dream to circumnavigate the globe and document the state of the oceans and beaches they visit while searching out the best waves and meet new people has become reality.

This film will be introduced by Ocean Gybe crew member Ryan Robertson

Terra Antarctica: Rediscovering the Seventh Continent (USA), Jon Bowermaster, 50 min

For six weeks John Bowermaster explored the Antarctic Peninsula by sea kayak, sailboat, foot and small plane, observing the fast changing evolution of this most remote place. Impacted by climate change – temperatures have warmed along the Peninsula faster than anywhere on the planet during the past 50 years – this part of Antarctica is also experiencing a boom in tourism and nations fighting over who owns what as its ice slowly disappears. This National Geographic-sponsored exploration is a one-of-a-kind look at Antarctica from a unique perspective: sea level. Winner of "Best Ocean Issues" at the 2009 Blue Ocean Film Festival.

Birthright (California), Sean Mullens, 6 min - World Premiere

Birthright is a film about the struggle and inspired triumph of the human spirit. At age 17, Michael Mitchell became a quadriplegic as a result of a surfing accident. This film documents Michael's daily journey from wheelchair to water's edge, where surfing a hybrid surf kayak enables him to transcend his physical limitations and to be his most natural self.

Out There (USA), Teton Gravity Research, 45 min - Canadian Premiere

Presented in partnership with the Vancouver Chapter of Surfrider

A 16mm and HiDef surf film, *Out There* showcases today's most progressive surfing, while considering humankind's impact on the world's oceans, beaches and waves. Through the experiences of surfers and the locals they meet throughout their travel, the film takes a thought-provoking look into the environmental destruction threatening known and unknown surf spots. *Out There* questions impending threats to Trestles in Southern California, pulp

mill pollution in Southern Chile and unrestricted development along Hawaii's famed North Shore and in Tahiti.