It’s no secret that we face unprecedented environmental challenges. Despite record levels of awareness and growing public outcry, American officials have struggled to find a path forward. Given all this, people often ask how we at The Redford Center remain so optimistic. The answer is simple: we’re hopeful because we’re surrounded by people who refuse to give up.

The filmmakers we support tackle hard environmental questions because they’re drawn to great stories. The activists we partner with lead us toward progress every day. The people featured in our films investigate, innovate, create, and organize because the stakes are too high. You, our supporters, provide us with the resources and motivation to leverage the tremendous power of film to change hearts, minds, and the world at large.

We all push forward together because we all want the same fundamental things: clean air, clean water, public lands, healthy foods, safe places to live, and the peace of mind that all of it will be here for future generations. That vision of a sustainable future is what powers our community.

Inspired by Robert Redford’s dual legacies of storytelling on screen and stewardship of the natural world, The Redford Center’s programs are carefully designed to galvanize environmental impact through film and media. We know that where facts alone fall short, there’s a story that can lead us to common ground. With this as our guiding insight, we brought our work to new heights in 2018.

Last year we invested in our team, bringing on new talent to grow our audience and impact. We dramatically expanded our grants and fiscal sponsorship portfolios to a combined 40 films with exciting new projects that allow us to explore and influence issue areas such as sustainable agriculture, indigenous land rights, adaptive climate innovations, youth environmental leadership, and the intersections of environment with art, culture, identity, and politics. And because we cannot afford to leave anyone out of the conversation, we prioritized inclusion, forged new partnerships, and strove to connect our films with active policy initiatives around the country.

In this urgent moment for the future of our planet, The Redford Center is uniquely poised to help shape public dialogue and accelerate environmental progress. As you read through our 2018 accomplishments we think you’ll agree, and we hope that you will feel as inspired as we do by the incredible community of artists and activists who are all pulling for our future.

Thank you for your commitment to this planet and for your generous support of our work.
Since the Industrial Revolution, fossil fuels have powered unprecedented innovations that shaped the modern world as we know it. But what it really cost us — in clean air, water, and soil, biodiversity and human health, and a stable climate — we now know and need to address in similarly unprecedented ways. Today, we’re on the threshold of another exhilarating period of innovation as the clean energy industry forges ahead, and of all the challenges at play, capturing the imaginations and the will of the people is the most urgent.

Our goal with the film Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution, is to build on the excitement around real-time climate solutions and help accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. James Redford’s eye-opening journey to the frontline of energy innovation offers a hopeful and grounded vision of a healthier, cleaner future. Since its December 2017 premiere, Happening has aired on HBO in 34 countries and been viewed nearly two million times in the U.S. alone. It has received three environmental awards and screened at over 550 community, school, and film festival events in 41 states and nine countries, from Northern Africa to Western Europe and a tour throughout New Zealand.

As exciting as these achievements have been, completing the film was only the first phase of the project. In 2018, we launched Happening’s outreach and impact campaign — a wide-reaching, cross-sector effort that has enabled us to introduce the film to students, faith groups, policymakers, business leaders, moviegoers, and clean energy stakeholders around the world.

34 countries
where Happening is airing on HBO

550+
screenings
in communities, schools, and festivals in 41 states and nine countries

2MM views
in the U.S. alone
NYWILD Film Festival’s  
Best Environmental Film Award

Slide Ranch’s  
Silver Trowel Award

Center for Resource Solutions’  
Green Power Leadership Award

In spite of the fact that it has the potential to save our planet, renewable energy can be boring. Try filming a solar panel, and you’ll know what I mean. We tried everything to avoid this: funny animation, impromptu insights by yours truly, and a whole conceit about me telling the story of clean energy to a methane-emitting cow with a degree in psychiatry.

In the end, none of it made the final cut. It took awhile, but we realized that staying true to my experience as I traveled around the country was enough. That what was happening was enough. And that maybe I was enough. Which leaves me wondering: maybe bovine therapy was more relevant than we thought.

“— James Redford

“
On the heels of the Happening premiere, James Redford continued his tour in a state too modest to boast its impressive track record on clean energy. In the documentary short, Happening: Minnesota - A Clean Energy Road Trip, our co-founder meets then-Governor Mark Dayton and a diverse cast of environmental advocates to find out exactly how Minnesota has become a high-performing clean energy state.

Happening: Minnesota was the outcome of our work with the Governors’ Wind and Solar Energy Coalition. We invited the governors from all 50 states to send us their clean energy stories for the chance to be featured in a Redford Center short film, and Minnesota’s proactive policies made it the clear frontrunner for the first Happening short sequel. We released the film with a timely op-ed in the Washington Post, co-authored by James Redford and Vote Solar’s Adam Browning, and premiered at a We Are Still In event hosted by the World Wildlife Fund during the 2018 Governor’s Climate Action Summit.
Teaching Happening

Today’s students are the innovators, educators, leaders, creatives, and contributors who are helping to scale clean energy systems to global proportions. Because The Redford Center is committed to elevating youth voices and leadership, we created Teaching Happening, an educational toolkit that includes a 50-minute chapterized version of the film and its accompanying curriculum for sixth to 12th grade classrooms.

“You were learning with [James Redford]. I liked that. I was able to connect with this movie more than others because of that.”

— Piper, Teaching Happening student
As humans, we understand the world through storytelling. That’s why it’s so critical that we have projects like Happening that help tell the story of clean energy through the eyes of real people. This is what it’s going to take to build the public and political will needed to speed the transition to clean energy and tackle the climate crisis.

— Rosalind Jackson, Managing Director, Vote Solar
Redford Center Grants
Overcoming the environmental challenges we face today calls for tactics that go beyond the traditional. Storytelling through film has the unique ability to make environmental issues compelling, relatable, and digestible to large audiences.

Redford Center Grants was designed to drive awareness and action on critical environmental issues through the development of feature films that are as educational as they are entertaining.

Funded by the New York Community Trust, this program provides early stage funding and strategic counsel to environmental filmmakers who are bringing solutions stories to life, and inviting audiences to make an impact where it matters most.
Impact Story: 
Reefs at Risk

Reefs At Risk, a short film by 2016-2017 grantees, Malina Fagan and Lynn Pelletier, focused on two chemicals commonly found in sunscreens that are contributing to the destruction of coral reefs. After an award-winning festival run, the message of the film reached a global audience.

In addition to being screened by five prime ministers and presidents, the directors partnered with Hawaiian Airlines to make the short film available to thousands of beach goers on flights to and from Hawaii as part of a sunscreen awareness campaign.

The film team’s impact efforts paid off in May 2018, when the Hawaii legislature passed a bill banning sunscreens containing the two chemicals (oxybenzone and octinoxate) that were examined in the film. Hawaii has now become a model for more oceanside states and localities — most recently, Key West, Florida — to take similar action to protect our oceans.

“Receiving support and guidance from The Redford Center, and their partners at GoPro, was instrumental in helping us get this passion project off the ground and into the minds of millions of people. We are thrilled to have helped educate ocean goers and create change on a legislative level in our home state of Hawaii, and now spreading to many parts of the word. We are so very grateful!”

— Malina Fagan, Co-Director of Reefs At Risk
New Grantees

In 2018 we launched our second open call for feature-length, environmentally-focused documentary film projects, attracting our strongest applicant pool to date. Seven exciting and distinct projects were chosen to receive a $20,000 development grant, a fully loaded GoPro camera kit and a one-of-a-kind, three-day Story Summit experience at the legendary Sundance Mountain Resort.

ADAPTATION

As doomsday narratives continue to dominate the climate conversation, this film offers a hopeful reminder of our resilience as a species, showcasing people across the world who are experimenting and sometimes thriving with adaptive methods, many of which may appear curious, remarkable, or even paradoxical.

THE BERING GATE

There are places on Earth that are unknown in one century and crucial in the next. The Bering Strait is one such place. As an impassable wall of ice transforms into a traversable ocean, this film spotlights the narrow strip of water that could make or break the future of the Arctic world.

EXPOSURE

In this unprecedented enviro-thriller, a team of women from the Arab World struggle together to reach climate change ground zero: The North Pole. Facing wild challenges — from Russian helicopter crashes and moving Arctic sea ice, to punishing frostbite and open leads of water — an unlikely story of resilience, triumph, and global citizenry emerges.
“Working with the Redford Center has been nothing short of a dream. It feels like a pivotal moment in my career, where I began feeling truly supported and encouraged by an organization I have long admired, to continue this life’s work of telling environmental stories through a hopeful, human lens. Thank you infinitely.”

— Fraser Jones, Director of Uniontown

MEAT THE FUTURE
Addressing the impacts of modern-day industrial animal agriculture, this film zeros in on a highly controversial solution-in-the-making, referred to as “cell-based,” “clean” or “cultured” meat — an idea hotly debated as these products approach commercialization in America with the potential to reinvent the meat industry.

RAISING ANIYA
Aniya Wingate, a 16-year-old black queer dancer, sets out on a creative journey to choreograph and produce a dance performance about surviving the destruction of Hurricane Harvey and the legacy of environmental pollution in her neighborhood in Houston, Texas.

UNIONTOWN
Following the story of community leader Esther Calhoun, this film weaves together the untold narratives of the modern day freedom fighters determined to clean up their community in Uniontown, Alabama, a long-silenced southern city continuously polluted by industrial waste and environmental racism.

YOUTH V. GOV
Twenty-one courageous American youth are leading a groundbreaking lawsuit against the U.S. government, asserting that its willful actions created our climate crisis, thus endangering their constitutional rights. If they’re successful, they will not only make history, they will change the future.
Core to the experience of being a Redford Center Grantee is the opportunity to engage with fellow filmmakers, industry representatives, and environmental issue experts at a Redford Center Story Summit. Over three brisk autumn days in the heart of the Wasatch Mountains, the 2018-2019 Redford Center Grantees participated in storytelling sessions and filmmaking workshops with our program partner, GoPro for a Cause, and interacted with speakers representing diverse subject areas and disciplines, from fundraising to marketing, journalism to environmental justice, and story development to impact planning.

“WOW! What an event. I was so pleased with the caliber of the filmmaking projects and your efforts to provide an affirming and productive experience for them. Thank you for all you are doing to advance environmental filmmaking. It is transformative, field-building work.”

— Kerry McCarthy, The New York Community Trust
Fiscal Sponsorships
New Projects

Another way The Redford Center furthers the cause of environmental storytelling is through fiscal sponsorships. As fundraisers, we know how much easier it can be to ask for financial support when donors can make a tax-deductible contribution. Our fiscal sponsorship program extends our tax-exempt status to independent filmmakers and provides them with individualized support throughout their filmmaking process. In 2018, we brought these seven film and media projects into our fiscal sponsorship program.

BREATHE
This virtual reality project from the creators of Tree visualizes a not-too-distant future where man-made climate change has depleted our natural resources and led to war in the Western world. The experience transforms the viewer into Rose, a young girl orphaned by war. Through her eyes, participants witness key moments of her life as she grows older, each with a distinct feel for what it means to be human.

ENDURING ICE
This film chronicles the travels of a scientific expedition escaping the chaos of a collapsing Arctic Ocean by traversing the Nares Strait, the most formidable passage of the polar North. Like war zone journalists, the team is embedded in the frontline of Arctic Ocean change. Their mission: to explore the essential role of sea ice in balancing our planet’s climate.

GIANTS RISING
This film will delve into the mysterious inner-workings of the iconic American redwood tree and explore our evolving relationship to it: first as a commodity as precious as gold, then as a dangerous battleground, and now, as a national treasure that we’re racing to understand and protect.

THE LOVE BUGS
This film is a heartwarming tale of entomologists and soulmates Lois and Charlie O’Brien, who found love through their passion for bugs. After 60 years, these scientific pioneers are giving away the world’s largest private collection of insects to help further their field of study.
“The Redford Center was at the top of my list of potential fiscal sponsors. They have a fantastic reputation as supporters of environmental filmmaking, and this is a time when these kinds of stories need to be shared. Because they selectively curate which films they support, I’ve been able to have one-on-one guidance and receive feedback on both the creative process and the business side of things. They are refreshingly unique as a fiscal sponsor.”

— Allison Otto, Director of The Love Bugs

**THIS LAND**
This film follows Faith E. Briggs as she runs 240 miles through six national monuments facing the threats of closure and/or commercial development under the current administration. In each location, Briggs meets a runner from a historically underrepresented community, who joins her for conversations that reveal unique cultural connections to the natural world.

**TONY FOSTER: JOURNEYS**
This film takes viewers to some of the world’s most scenic perches with renowned artist, Tony Foster, who travels by foot, raft, or canoe to paint landscapes in some of the most remote parts of Earth (he’s painted all three sides of Mount Everest!) to raise public awareness about wilderness destruction.

**UNTITLED STEWART BRAND DOCUMENTARY**
This film is a provocative introduction to countercultural icon and publisher of *The Whole Earth Catalog*, Stewart Brand. In it, Brand offers views on modern environmentalism and cyberculture through wildly imaginative projects, from building a colossal, 10,000-year clock that will serve as a monument to long-term thinking, to using biotechnology to resurrect extinct species.

**VAGRANT VIKING**
Based on the namesake 1953 book by Peter Freuchen, this narrative film series will recount the author’s adventures as an Arctic explorer, environmental activist, and Hollywood screenwriter who became a threat to Hitler during World War II. Though Freuchen may have fathomed himself a vagrant, these stories will reveal him as a modern Viking who fought for the betterment of humanity.
Raise the River
Building on the message and mission of our 2012 film, Watershed, The Redford Center has remained a core member of Raise the River, a coalition of six organizations in the United States and Mexico who are working to bring water and life back to the Colorado River Delta. The Redford Center’s role has been to bolster the efforts of our coalition partners — The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Pronatura Noroeste, Restauremos el Colorado, and Sonoran Institute — by doing what we do best: telling a story that informs, inspires, and activates audiences around key solutions.

In November 2018, the International Boundary and Water Commission released a report affirming that the coalition’s Delta restoration efforts are working. Replanted cottonwood, willow, and mesquite trees and aster shrubs are surviving; birds, like the yellow-billed cuckoo and Yuma Clapper Rail, and other native wildlife are returning to the region; and groundwater has been recharged, promoting natural plant growth and supporting local farmers’ irrigation needs. Beyond the hard science, the report also found that an important cultural transition is taking place — a meaningful reconnection between locals and their environment, as well as growing community and philanthropic engagement.

Revitalizing the Delta ecosystem is a long-term, binational commitment, and we are inspired by the dramatic transformation that has already taken place. With your continued support, The Redford Center will help Raise the River demonstrate nature’s incredible resiliency through the comeback of the Colorado River Delta.
Starting with their film, Watershed — which provided the inspiration for launching the Raise the River campaign — The Redford Center’s storytelling expertise continues to play a significant role in building support for our coalition’s work in restoring the Colorado River Delta.

— John Shepard, Senior Director of Programs, Sonoran Institute
Redford Center Benefit:

Stories That Move
To top off a record year for The Redford Center, we hosted our first live benefit event in downtown San Francisco, bringing together hundreds of our supporters, partners, and friends, for a memorable night of story, song, and tribute to the Redford legacy of environmental stewardship.

A landmark part of the evening was the presentation of the inaugural Robert Redford Award to the 20-year-old artist-activist, Jaden Smith. Since age 14, Smith has leveraged his platforms as an actor, musician, and social entrepreneur to show young people that environmental stewardship can be fun, creative, and even open pathways to economic opportunity.
This award is like handing me and my generation a torch. This is fire in my hands, and we will preserve it, and we will grow it, and together we will emblazon it across the generation and those to come.

— Jaden Smith
Growing
In the Redford Center’s most ambitious year yet, our successes in 2018 were due in no small part to the amazing team that came together to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that presented themselves.

With new talent (listed on the right) on our Board of Directors, Grants Advisors, and staff, we strengthened our programs, expanded our resources, and grew our audience. The hard work and generosity of our community continues to make the impossible possible.

To you, our many partners, donors, supporters and friends who help change the world by offering your time, talent, and treasure to The Redford Center, we thank you on behalf of the planet and future generations. Special thanks to the New York Community Trust, our Board, and Advisors.

“The Redford Center community is much needed in our world, where environmental stories need to compellingly and effectively reach a broad audience. As an educator, I challenge my students to understand environmental problems from multiple and complex perspectives, and I believe that The Redford Center films do the same.”

— Brinda Sarathy
At our year-end benefit, we were honored to host renowned oceanographer Walter Munk, who passed away at 101 years old in February 2019. Dr. Munk’s wave prediction research was pivotal for Allied military successes during World War II, earning him the title, “Einstein of the Oceans.” As a centenarian, Dr. Munk was still making waves in the realm of climate research, and his legacy will continue to inspire future students and stewards of the environment.

In Memoriam: Walter H. Munk
(1917-2019)

It’s important that you work on things that you care about and do a good job and not be too worried about consequences. Don’t be afraid to get involved.

— Dr. Walter H. Munk
It’s time to hand the reins to our youth and encourage them to become the designers of their future. Young people have the optimism, energy, and fresh perspective we need to meet our environmental challenges head-on. We must honor their efforts and support them as leaders.

— Robert Redford
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