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River expedition stops in Moab to talk about public lands, water issues

Sharon Sullivan Moab Sun News Jun 20, 2019



Christopher Warren, owner of Beatnik Prints in Boulder, Colorado, is one of the artist presenters for Sesquicentennial Colorado River Exhibition (SCREE) Moab: "Weaving narratives and policy: storytelling on the Colorado Plateau." [Photo courtesy of Christopher Warren]

Story Highlights

Scientists and artists retrace John Wesley Powell's expedition on Colorado, Green rivers

Hopi dancers; presentations on water issues, climate change and public lands; films about nearby rivers; and artwork inspired by John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition of the Colorado and Green rivers are being highlighted at a symposium in Moab on June 22 and 23.

Sesquicentennial Colorado River Exploring Expedition (SCREE): "Weaving Narratives and Policy: Storytelling on the Colorado Plateau" is part of a University of Wyoming-based project surrounding the 150th anniversary of Powell's legendary journey.

"I pay homage to amazing landscapes by reinterpreting it through my artistic lens. The Colorado River basin has some of the most interesting topography in the country and the world."

A group that includes artists, scientists and historians from Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico, are taking a modern-day look at the arid West while retracing Powell's journey.



Approximately 55 people will get on and off the SCREE river trip at various points, which left from Green River, Wyoming, on May 24 (the same place and day that Powell began his journey).

Sponsored by SCREE and Living Rivers — a nonprofit that works to restore and preserve the Colorado River ecosystem — the Moab event is one of several sites along the river route where symposiums will take place.

Hopi dancers from Second Mesa, Arizona, will kick off the Moab symposium on Saturday, June 22, after a light breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and an introduction at 10 a.m., at the Moab Arts and Recreation Center (MARC), 111 E. 100 North.

Dressed in traditional clothing styles, Hopi dancers will perform a sacred dance with the audience standing in a circle surrounding them, SCREE organizer Rica Fulton said. The Hopi dancers will perform again at 3:15 p.m. and on Sunday at 11:15 a.m.

Dan McCool, professor emeritus at the University of Utah, will deliver a presentation called "Climate Change and Public Lands" at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.

"I will talk broadly about environmental justice and climate change and public lands," McCool said. "We will need new models of collaboration to ensure justice as we work through these problems," of scarcity that will especially affect Native Americans, low-income people and those with little political power.

John Weisheit, of Living Rivers, will talk about water issues, such as the uranium waste piles on the banks of the Colorado River and how much water is available locally for new development in Moab. He will present "Relationship of Water and the Community of Moab" on Sunday at 10 a.m.

Sesquicentennial
Colorado River
Exploring Expedition:
"Weaving Narratives
and Policy:
Storytelling on the
Colorado Plateau"

When: Public Lands,
Saturday, June 22, from 9:30
a.m. to 3:45 p.m.; Water,
Sunday, June 23, from 9:30
a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Moab Arts and
Recreation Center (MARC),
111 E. 100 North

Cost: Free

Info: Call 435-259-6272



Also on Sunday, Robert Adler, from the University of Utah College of Law, will deliver “Water Law and Climate Change,” followed by a screening of “The Story of Chicken Raper,” a short film by Cody Perry about the Dolores River. The day will end with Tyler Graham’s film “Glen Canyon Rediscovered.” Both filmmakers will be present for a question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the film screening.

Graham received a National Geographic grant to make the film, Fulton said. The film shows Graham and his team kayaking the length of Lake Powell, where they document side canyons emerging from its dwindling water levels.

Three artists will be present on Saturday to talk about their work inspired by the Colorado Plateau. The artists include Serena Supplee, a Moab artist known for her colorful oil paintings of the Grand Canyon and southern Utah; SCREE lead artist Patrick Kikut; and Christopher Warren, owner of Beatnik Prints in Boulder, Colorado.

“I’m going to present on my artwork of the Colorado River basin and how art has connected me to the landscape,” Warren said. He creates clothing and sculptures based on topographical maps and landscapes. “I pay homage to amazing landscapes by reinterpreting it through my artistic lens. The Colorado River basin has some of the most interesting topography in the country and the world.”

One of Warren’s pieces, a three-dimensional coffee table sculpture that depicts the confluence of the Colorado and Green rivers where they meet in Canyonlands National Park, was purchased by Back of Beyond Books in Moab where it is permanently on display.

The SCREE symposium is free and open to the public. Lunch and light refreshments will be served.

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