



Attendee Engagement

With virtual, or “socially distant” events like drive-ins, it is critically important to have a plan for attendee engagement. The best place to start is here: treat your virtual event as much like an in-person event as possible. Remember that people are not purchasing tickets just to watch films; they are attending your event for a sense of community and involvement, especially during this isolating time. Having a plan for engagement will not only help you sell more tickets, but will foster deeper connections with your constituents both during your event and in the future.

-

Start with a good emcee. A good emcee makes all the difference—especially virtually! When you’re thinking about who will record your host clips, choose someone who will keep the energy level up and engage your audience. Think charisma! You’ll want someone who familiar with your organization’s mission and the films so that they feel comfortable with the script and their words come across naturally.

-

Showcase a local film. Wild & Scenic is a great stage to showcase a local environmental or issue-driven film. A local addition can create a lot of buzz and hook your hometown media outlets. Plus, audiences love to see stories about where they’re from and recognize local faces. Ask your Tour Coordinator for more details about ingesting a film into your program.

-

Invite a special guest speaker or filmmaker. For virtual events, including a special guest in your program is a great use for one of your additional host clips! This person could be a local high-profile environmentalist, someone working on an inspiring community project, or perhaps an adventure traveler or photographer who has a knack for great storytelling.

You can also invite a filmmaker to join your event! We provide contact information for all our filmmakers in your Film Program Workbook. With most events taking place virtually, the time commitment and geographic restrictions are much less of a factor. Whether it’s recording an introduction to their own film or participating in a Q&A session, many filmmakers are glad to support your event and spread the word about their cause. This is another great hook for your local media.

-



Add-on events. You have a contract with Wild & Scenic for the entire tour season! With virtual, it's easier than ever to host additional events. Outside of your main film festival, you might add a Video on Demand program or Feature Film Screening later on in the year. Ask your Sales Manager for more details and ideas.

Looking for a way to engage local schools or families around environmental issues? Ask us about our School Programs! We offer a curriculum-based program for educators and an at-home version for parents and families covering grades K-12.

Once we're back in person, consider hosting a VIP gathering, after party, or a reception featuring local artists and musicians. Add a wine tasting or food pairing to your event, or host a silent auction. In the meantime, can you take any of these ideas to the virtual space?

-

Raffles, auctions, door prices & giveaways. Raffle tickets, silent auctions, and giveaways are great ways to engage your audience and give your fundraising efforts a boost. If you are hosting a virtual event, Qudio is compatible with [32auctions](#) and can be used as a platform to sell raffle tickets directly in the Screening Room during your live event.

Include your local community and engage your sponsors! Many businesses may not be in a position this year to be a monetary sponsor, but may be able to contribute an item, a gift card, or an experience to be used in your raffle or auction. The logistics may be a little trickier to coordinate in a virtual space, but it is absolutely doable!

Remember to research any state-specific regulations around raffle tickets and raffle prizes to ensure your program is in compliance.

-

Refreshments. Who doesn't love food and drinks? With an evening festival, you're asking people to attend an event right at dinner time. For your in-person event, offering light snacks and drinks can keep the energy high and attendees happy until the very end of the program.

You can include refreshments virtually! Partner with a local restaurant or brewery to offer Food & Beverage tickets. Remember to keep the choices minimal and simple, and have clear instructions for both your ticket purchasers and your restaurant partner(s) on how and when the orders will be placed and picked up.

-



Initiate community dialogue. For virtual events, your host clips are key in driving this conversation, so make sure you include conversation starters or pointed questions in your emcee script. The goal is to keep people thinking and talking about the issues you raise, so that they are more inclined to take action.

During your virtual event, take advantage of the chat box feature to spark dialogue with your audience members. Ask questions based on your host clips or the films. Share links to your website highlighting your organizations work. Get your staff or board involved in the chat to encourage lively conversation!

If you are in-person, have your emcee engage the audience in a 5-minute conversation on “what can we do locally?” Ask things like: what can the community do better to reduce carbon emissions; how can we pressure local industries to change their policies; etc. Consider a community roundtable with key community influencers for an open discussion to find common ground and room for compromise.

-

Host an EnviroFair. Share the spotlight and invite other local non-profits to the (digital) table. This not only shows a strong sense of community, but also helps highlight local issues where your audience can take direct action. While we may not be setting up tables in a busy lobby before show time, consider creating a virtual EnviroFair on your website. This is a great opportunity for all groups to highlight their mission, share petitions, gather names, and link to more information. [See our Flagship Festival Enviro-Fair here!](#)

-

Membership offers and incentives. Is one of your goals to renew memberships or sign up new members during this event? Keep membership top of time as you’re planning and executing your outreach strategy! Identify potential new members and invite them to the event. Galvanize your current members to call friends and neighbors to attend.

During your event, make it easy and attractive for your audience to become members! If you are hosting in-person, offer membership incentives at the ticket counter or put a membership form in each program. Have a big ticket raffle drawing just for new or renewing members. Offer exclusive discounted student or family memberships.



How do you encourage membership virtually? Consider special ticket discounts for members. Include membership offers in one or more of your ticket packages. Link to your membership page or sell membership directly in your Screening Room during your live event. Remind your emcee to make a call for membership during a host clip highlighting the benefits of signing up today.

-

Include a call to action and opportunity for continuing engagement.

Sample script built by one of our On Tour partners, Friends of the Inyo in Bishop, CA.

- **INTRO:** As the films demonstrate, one person can make a difference. You and I, friends and neighbors.
- **CONSERVATION** – Protection of wild places, wildlife, clean air & water doesn't happen on its own. Preserved landscapes did not come by accident. The recovery of endangered species like the Bald Eagle or Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep doesn't happen by itself. It may be ironic, conservation and preservation of nature are made possible by human actions - people, like you and I actively caring for the world around us.
- **CHALLENGE** – I want to challenge each of you to make conservation happen in your own life. From driving less, to turning off a running faucet to speaking out at local meetings or getting your hands dirty planting a tree or restoring a trail. All of these actions make a difference. It can be disheartening to think of how we can influence huge global issues like climate change or species extinction, but rather than be disempowered, we need to empower ourselves and our communities through small, achievable actions.
- **CONCLUSION** – Conservation will not happen on its own. And as these films indicate, individual actions do make a difference for communities, wildlife, landscapes. Be one of these people who change the world. Join us and get your hands dirty.