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SYRCL's Wild & Scenic Film Festival Marks 25 Years with Commemorative Poster Art by Fest Co-Founder Kathy Dotson and a New Music Partnership with Madcap Records

SYRCL's Wild & Scenic Film Festival is proud to announce that the official poster art for the 25th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival, happening on February 18-22nd in Grass Valley and Nevada City, has been created by Kathy Dotson, an artist whose connection to this festival runs deeper than most. Dotson co-founded the Wild & Scenic Film Festival during her time at SYRCL and served as the festival's director as it grew into one of the largest environmental film festivals in the United States. She also conceived and launched the festival's national On Tour program, which now reaches more than 40,000 people annually across 125 communities. Twenty-five years later, she returns to the festival she helped build, this time with a brush in hand.

Dotson's poster brings together the landscapes and imagery that define both this region and this festival. The colorful pinwheel in the center captures the 2027 festival's theme, **Momentum**, standing as a metaphor for twenty-five years of changing winds, shifting issues, and a community that keeps the movement spinning forward. The salmon arcing through the composition is a direct nod to SYRCL's mission of protecting and restoring the Yuba River watershed. "It's life cycle — river to ocean and back again — represents transformation and coming full circle," Dotson says. "Maybe I'm a little part of that salmon too, jumping — or dancing — for joy and hope."

Dotson's portfolio spans festival and band posters, album covers, children's books, and advocacy art, including her ongoing design work for the High Sierra Music Festival and her visual contributions to the Indivisible movement, where she channels the same belief that fueled the founding of Wild & Scenic: that art and activism are most powerful when they

work together. The 25th anniversary poster is, in many ways, the fullest expression of that conviction. As Dotson says, "Twenty-five years ago a few of us at SYRCL willed this festival into existence — pure momentum. Getting to illustrate that energy for the anniversary poster feels like the universe handing me back something I helped build. I am beyond honored."

Additionally, SYRCL's Wild & Scenic Film Festival is thrilled to welcome live music back to the festival in a way that matches the ambition of its 25th anniversary season, announcing a new partnership with Madcap Music Group. Founded in Nevada City by former major-label executive, producer, and songwriter Kelly Rutledge, Madcap is an independent record label and production firm with deep connections to some of the most significant music made in the past two decades. It pairs old-school recording craftsmanship with innovative technology and a singular commitment to authentic storytelling. That commitment -- to real artists, real songs, and real connection -- is entirely in keeping with what SYRCL's Wild & Scenic Film Festival has championed for 25 years.

"Music is built on momentum — one note leads to another; one line starts the rhyme, and before you know it, you've reached the chorus," says Rutledge. "That feels deeply connected to what Wild & Scenic has built over 25 years: using stories to shift perspective and inspire meaningful action. Music adds another texture to the story, giving the message another way to resonate within the community and carry that movement forward."

As part of this partnership, Madcap will be producing a fully expanded live music program throughout the festival weekend — February 18–22 in Nevada City — including pop-up performances and music-themed speaker panels. In celebration of the milestone anniversary, Madcap is also producing a limited-edition commemorative vinyl soundtrack titled *Momentum: Wild & Scenic Film Festival 25th Anniversary Soundtrack*, featuring 10–12 original licensed tracks from artists in Nevada County and across the nation, curated around the festival's 2027 theme. The vinyl will be available exclusively by pre-order and in person during the festival, with 25 percent of proceeds benefiting SYRCL's river initiatives. Artists across all genres are currently invited to submit original music inspired by the theme of Momentum — submissions are open through October 21, 2026, at a \$25 non-refundable administrative fee per submission, with unreleased music strongly preferred and a maximum song length of four minutes. More details can be found on the Madcap website: <https://www.madcapmusicgroup.com/wsff27> -- Further information about the live performance lineup and artist announcements will be released as the festival approaches.

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ABOUT THE 2027 WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

One of the nation's largest environmental and adventure film festivals, SYRCL's 25th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival combines stellar filmmaking, cinematography, and first-rate storytelling to inform, inspire, and ignite solutions to restore the earth and human communities while creating a positive future for generations to come. Festivalgoers are treated to a wide variety of award-winning films, including those about nature, community activism, adventure, conservation, water, energy, wildlife, and environmental justice. The 2027 Wild & Scenic Film Festival is hosted and produced by South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) and takes place Feb. 18-22 in Nevada City and Grass Valley, CA and online virtually Feb. 19-28. This flagship festival kicks off a nationwide tour bringing Wild & Scenic films to more than 40,000 people annually. For more information, visit <https://www.WildandScenicFilmFestival.org>

ABOUT SYRCL:

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL, pronounced "circle") is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a rural, grassroots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with over 3,500 members and volunteers based in Nevada City, CA. See: www.yubariver.org

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