

THE **REDFORD** CENTER

Redford Center Grants
2020-2021 Grantee Cohort



Stories That Move

Co-founded in 2005 by Robert Redford and his son James Redford, The Redford Center uses the power of storytelling to galvanize environmental justice and regeneration. Our cross-cutting programs support environmental storytellers and invest in impact-driven narrative strategies. By amplifying and changing the conversations around environmentalism, we aim to engage a much broader and more diverse population in the movement.

Over the years, The Redford Center has produced three award-winning feature documentaries and over 30 short films, supported 75+ film and media projects with grants and other services, inspired over 400 student films, and dispersed more than \$8 million to our fiscally sponsored projects. Our films activate real change – we have engaged millions of viewers across all 50 states and 45 countries, inspiring hope and generating demand for a world where human and planetary health are fundamental values driving

action. Our impact campaigns have halted the construction of dirty coal plants, reconnected the Colorado River to the Sea of Cortez, and helped accelerate the clean energy revolution in America.

The majority of our diverse film portfolio is made by or about women leading the environmental and climate justice movement, and our growing network of 400+ environmentally engaged storytellers also represent youth, communities of color, and LGBTQ+ communities, who are among the groups historically underrepresented in media and the environmental movement, and who are often among those leading progress on the ground and enacting the solutions needed to safeguard humanity and our planet.

The Redford Center believes in stories that move—and the power of hope—to create a world in equitable balance. Find our stories at

www.redfordcenter.org.



Redford Center Grants

Designed to support documentary filmmakers as they tackle some of the most critical environmental issues of our day, the Redford Center Grants Program provides financial and other support services to a diverse array of stories poised for impact.

We are often asked what we mean by environmental solutions. The answer is complex. The term “environmentalist” has a long, often polarizing history and carries the marks of colonialism, racism, and genocide. Since we still use the term to describe our work, an important part of our efforts is to reimagine the term to be far more inclusive and representative of the true mosaic of people and groups working toward environmental health and justice, and to share their stories.

Therefore, amidst an escalating environmental and climate crisis and even during an unprecedented global pandemic, we tripled the size of our Grantee Cohort in 2020. Our work now is to support these dynamic storytellers—by sharing knowledge and expertise, amplifying their efforts, and connecting them with additional opportunities, partnerships,

funding, and advice that will lead them toward their ultimate engagement goals.

Some of the most essential aspects of our support involve helping build community around these projects, advising on the design of intentional impact strategies and campaigns, and amplifying the important work these filmmakers are doing. By investing in the stories of people and communities who are at the forefront of environmental solutions, we know it will inspire more of the same.

Past impact campaigns from Redford Center grantees have included helping to enact bans on sunscreens made with chemicals that were harming ocean reefs (Reefs at Risk), increasing the participation of young women in STEM programs (Inventing Tomorrow), supporting youth activists in pushing for a groundbreaking legal solution to climate change (Youth v Gov), and bolstering efforts to remove coal ash from landfills and construct a new water treatment plant in Uniontown, PA (Uniontown). We believe this grantee cohort has even more potential for generating real-world impact.



We proudly present the 2020-2021 Redford Center Grantee Cohort.

All 22 films supported through the program meet the moment of our environmental predicament in unique and compelling ways and offer audiences pathways for action and engagement. This diverse portfolio of filmmakers and projects represents a number of critical voices and perspectives on environmental justice and regeneration, including stories of people on the frontlines. All projects share one persistent and inspiring goal: a just transition to a healthier future for all.

FOOD

Appalachian Spring
Fork in the Road
Food for the Rest of us
Harvest
Aina Momona – Land of Plenty
Salt Sisters

JUSTICE

We Still Here / Aquí Estamos
Untitled Annie Mae Aquash Documentary
Police in our Climate
To the End
Impossible Town
“IZ”
RICO

WATER

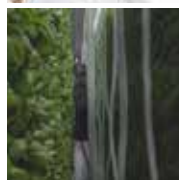
Demon Mineral
Hollow tree
OAKLEAD
Manzanar, Diverted:
When Water Becomes Dust

LAND

Biruté
Path of the Panther
Untitled Cultural Fire Film
Razing Liberty Square
The Park



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These filmmakers remind us of the power of nature in balance and the importance of getting our own hands in the soil, of sustaining ourselves and our communities, and of finding new ways to build an equitable future through food. Each filmmaker seeks for their film to be part of work that needs to get done to make sure our planet is sustainable, generative, and feeds the healthy future we're calling for.



Appalachian Spring

Director: Evan Mascagni

Collaborators: Shannon Post (Producer)

Appalachian Spring seeks to contribute to the larger policy conversations about sustainable agriculture and food systems in the U.S, and to raise awareness about issues specifically affecting Appalachia. *Appalachian Spring* follows a group of Kentuckians on a journey to create a sustainable future for a spirited community in economic decline, as they work to transform coal country into farm country.



The film centers on the opening of AppHarvest, a 60-acre high-tech greenhouse that grows fresh produce for the heart of Appalachia. By hiring and training former local opioid addicts, AppHarvest builds excitement for the future of Appalachia and addresses skeptics by creating educational programs that prepare young people for the future of farming.



Food for the Rest of Us

Director: Caroline Cox

Collaborators: Tiffany Ayalik (Producer/Writer)



A Hawaiian organic farm connects young people to the land and helps them pay for college. Greenhouses are erected in the Arctic. Farms flourish in the inner city. A female kosher butcher blazes her own trail. Food is at the center of our lives even when the creation of that food is taken away from us. **Food for the Rest of Us** examines our right to be in a direct relationship with our food—and how to fight for that right in societies that alienate us from that which nourishes. An intersectional story, **Food for the Rest of Us** highlights how getting back to the land is directly tied to the racial, economic, gender, and environmental justice movements like Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, and Times Up.



Fork in the Road

Director: Vivian Sorenson

Collaborators: Lisa Holmes (Executive Director) & Jonathan Nastasi (Director of Photography)

Fork in the Road shows how we can mitigate climate change through our culinary choices. The film follows renegade farmers who use regenerative growing practices and visionary chefs who are creating a new climate cuisine. These are the heroes who are forging a resilient and delicious future of food. **Fork in the Road** offers hopeful solutions, highlighting nutritious ingredients and recipes so that we can source, cook, and eat deliciously and responsibly.





Harvest

Directors: Natalie Baszile & Hyacinth Parker



Harvest, a character-driven docuseries, focuses on the unique circumstances and passions of farmers of color around the globe, offering an intimate look at their lives and realities. It celebrates the beauty and artistry of farming and the people who act as stewards of the land at a pivotal moment when humankind is grappling with our food sources and re-examining our relationship to the Earth. For example, we meet farmers like Marvin Frink, who after a 30-year career in the military, with multiple tours in Afghanistan is now retired from the Special Forces. But the transition to civilian life was anything but smooth; Marvin saw and did things during his tours of duty that challenged his core beliefs. In 2011, home from a deployment and stationed at Fort Bragg, he was haunted by memories of war and suffered from debilitating PTSD. He withdrew from friends and family and was seriously contemplating suicide when a call from his father to come home to Florida pulled him back from the brink. Marvin tells the story of how an introduction to an older black farmer changed his life and led him to realize his dream to farm cattle.



Aina Momona, Land of Plenty

Directors: Sergio Rapu & Elena Rapu

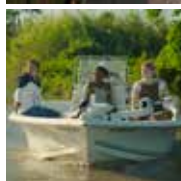
A small farm on the North Shore of Oahu leverages its unique relationship with a resort to create a new model of local agriculture in a state that is heavily reliant on imported foods. This feature-length documentary follows a group of farmers, entrepreneurs, and activists who have been put in charge of revitalizing the 468 acre Kilima Farms, on the world-famous North Shore of Oahu. Kuilima's landowners also own the largest resort in the area, which brings a unique financial cushion to the enterprise but also creates uncertainty in a community that has historically opposed tourism development. The film follows the Kuilima team as they implement new processes to increase yields and reduce pesticide use by intermingling crops and managing a unique relationship with their landowners that requires not only providing produce to the resort's kitchen but also agro-tourism experiences that cater to local and out-of-state visitors.



Salt Sisters

Director: Heidi Burkey

Caught in the midst of a struggling coastal economy impacted by global warming, female lobsterman Colleen Francke attempts to get ahead of the inevitable changes to her industry and return to a dream she thought she lost during years of alcohol abuse: building a seaweed farm that will employ and support other women in recovery. Facing opposition from local fishermen, risking financial stability, and fighting through her own recovery journey, Colleen will discover what it takes to lead these women into Maine's new coastal economy – rehabilitating both the water and themselves along the way. **Salt Sisters** is an intimate and revealing portrait of Colleen and her trio of sea farmers as they work to seed, grow, maintain, and harvest kelp to sell to a burgeoning market. The story is also about aquaculture, and what the birth of that industry could mean not only for carbon capture and ocean health, but also for those in the fishing community who are rapidly losing, or have already lost, their livelihood, and how to keep longtime coastal folks employed on the water.



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WATER

Demon Mineral

Hollow tree

OAKLEAD

Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust

These films invite us into the past to understand the complicated histories around how water has been used, abused, and misused in the U.S., and the resilient people who continue to fight for water as the basis of life. The future of water is our future and our watersheds must be better managed, allowed to flow, renewed through its natural systems, and distributed equitably among all people. These films are both capturing and inspiring this regenerative process.



Demon Mineral

Director: Hadley Austin

Collaborators: Dr. Tommy Rock (Co-Writer)



Demon Mineral documents life in the radioactive desert on the Navajo Reservation. Spanning across a landscape perforated by orphaned uranium mines in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, the film follows a group of indigenous scientists, elders, and activists as they work to protect a vital living space on contaminated land with contaminated water. **Demon Mineral** unearths the history of uranium extraction on indigenous land and shows the work of Diné scientists working to clean up the spaces that are sacred and significant to them, spaces made dangerous by irresponsible mining practices. The documentary also looks more widely at uranium across the country, in both expected and unexpected places. Radiating outwards from the Navajo reservation, **Demon Mineral** explores the imprint of international geopolitics and mineral markets on local communities and the work required to get the land tested and keep people safe.



Hollow Tree

Director: Kira Akerman

Collaborators: Monique Walton, Chachi Hauser, Jolene Pinder (Producers)

On the Mississippi River, hundred-year-floods have become the norm, hurricanes occur earlier each year, and the coast loses over a football field of land every hour. **Hollow Tree** follows three young women as they come of age along the river in a time of rapid climate change. Their journey reveals that flooding and land loss often do not occur arbitrarily, but as the result of intentional decisions that value profit over people. As they learn about how the Mississippi has been managed and controlled, Mckenzie, Annabelle, and Tanielma come to identify with the river. Their individual search for identity and meaning becomes connected to our nation's coming-of-age in a new climate reality.





OAKLEAD

Director: Alex J. Bledsoe

Collaborators: Adrian Burrell (Producer)



In Oakland, California—where lead poisoning rates are higher than in Flint, Michigan—families fight to protect their children from their own homes and schools, confronting over a century of environmental racism. **OAKLEAD** supports policy movements for Oakland's proposed proactive rental inspection policy and the establishment of a clean water policy in Oakland Unified Public Schools. In 2016, Reuters published a groundbreaking investigative report finding that the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland is one of 3,000 communities in the United States with higher rates of lead poisoning than Flint, Michigan. **OAKLEAD** investigates why lead poisoning—the longest pediatric epidemic in U.S. history—still occurs and why there is a lack of public awareness and institutional action on the issue. For over a decade, Oakland community organizers have advocated for a housing policy to protect vulnerable renters. Now, revelations of lead contamination in public school drinking water have caused Bay Area families to ask whether they are safe anywhere. **OAKLEAD** illuminates how systemic racism, classism, and xenophobia continue to fuel this silent epidemic and that what's happening in Oakland is part of a global pattern.



Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust

Director: Ann Kaneko

Collaborators: Jin Yoo-Kim (Producer)

With the goal of building a more inclusive and diverse environmental justice community, **Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust** provides a fresh interpretation of the Japanese-American confinement site by examining the environmental and political history behind the World War II internment camp. Prior to the war, Manzanar was where Native Americans were driven out, and farmers and ranchers were bought out by the LA Department of Water and Power.



The film poetically weaves together memories of intergenerational women who have a deep understanding of the importance of water and land management. **Manzanar Diverted** also exposes the motivations for forced removal of communities as a means to control and extract resources. From the majestic peaks of the snow-capped Sierras to the parched valley of Payahuunadu, Native Americans, Japanese-American World War II incarcerated, and environmentalists form an unexpected alliance to defend their land and water. The film exposes the legacy of colonization, racism, and social injustice at Manzanar, while highlighting the power of intersectionality when Japanese Americans, indigenous communities, and locals who have been mistreated by government entities band together for the interests of all citizens.

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JUSTICE

We Still Here/Aquí Estamos
Untitled Annie Mae Aquash Documentary
Police in our Climate
To the End
Impossible Town
"IZ"
RICO

Galvanizing environmental justice begins with addressing the way we treat each other, and these films show what's possible when communities organize, build movements, and speak up about issues of injustice. In working towards a future of equitable balance, where everyone has access to clean air and water, healthy food and safe outdoors spaces, then working for justice and equity for all people must be at the center of our work.



We Still Here / Aquí Estamos

Director: Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi

Collaborators: Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzzi (Impact Producer)



In response to the government's incompetent relief management during Hurricane Maria, young residents from Comerío, Puerto Rico take control and transform not only their lives but their community. We Still Here introduces the incredible youth navigating a disaster that brought an unprecedented level of devastation to an island already in economic and political crisis. In the lush mountains in the center of Puerto Rico, 24-year-old Mariangelie Ortiz leads a group of young residents, who never thought they would become the leaders of their community, to Washington D.C. to protest in the halls of Congress. This is a "living documentary" which offers the viewer the chance to change the outcome of people's lives in real time.



Untitled Annie Mae Aquash Documentary

Director: Yvonne Russo

Collaborators: Amy Kaufman (Producer)

A call by Indigenous women to action, this film tells a story of Indigenous activist Annie Mae Aquash, one of the thousands who make up the staggering number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. An unprecedented investigation into her unsolved murder highlights the continuing fight for Indigenous sovereignty and the effects of centuries of colonization on Indigenous women and girls.



Police in Our Climate

Director: Khari Slaughter

Collaborators: Aletta Brady, Our Climate Voices (Producer)

Diving deeply into the connections between environmental racism and policing, this film follows the lives of four families who live at the intersection of environmental and police violence, to explore ways to build climate-resilient communities free of police violence and brutality. Addressing the overlapping crises of COVID-19, climate change, and police violence, which harm Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities disproportionately, **Police in Our Climate** shows why these are not disparate struggles. Neighborhoods of color face high rates of pollution, hyper-policing, and limited access to health care, which too often are a lethal combination. Structural factors such as poverty, housing instability, and poor access to healthcare make avoiding the virus and getting medical treatment difficult. High concentration of policing exacerbates environmental injustices and systemic violence by weakening the community's health in the face of inevitable encounters with police as a restrictive presence, rather than an expansive, supportive, and protective one.



To The End

Director: Rachel Lears

Collaborator: Sabrina Schmidt Gordon (Producer)



Stopping climate change is a question of political courage, and the clock is ticking. **To the End** follows the Green New Deal from an obscure idea to a political touchstone of a generation, through the interwoven narratives of four young women of color who are grappling with challenges of leadership and power that they have never encountered before.



Hoping to galvanize and create momentum around the realization of the Green New Deal's ambitious solutions to climate change and inequality, **To the End** follows the stories of four key players in the rise of the Green New Deal's bold, ambitious plan. The Key players: Varshini Prakash, the dynamic director of the Sunrise Movement, which catapulted to national prominence in 2018 after occupying Nancy Pelosi's office with Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, launching the Green New Deal into the spotlight. Alexandra Rojas, leader of the Justice Democrats, the group that ran Ocasio-Cortez's campaign and backed the congresswomen known as "The Squad". Rhiana Gunn-Wright, policy writer with a razor sharp wit and an architect of the Green New Deal, and US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Green New Deal's best known champion.



Impossible Town

Director: Meg Griffiths

Collaborator: Scott Faris

Impossible Town is the story of unlikely heroine Ayne Amjad and her quest to relocate the 250 residents of Minden, WV to her own remote property so they can live free of the toxic contamination that threatens their community with extinction. It is a mission her father began thirty years ago and, in light of his untimely passing, one that she must complete in the face of infighting, the pandemic, and overwhelming odds.



For four decades, the town of Minden, West Virginia has languished in a toxic cesspool stuck between a sewage treatment facility and a water park. Cancer rates are four times the national average and nearly every one of the town's 247 residents has a friend or family member whose fallen victim to illness. Despite failed clean-up attempts and plunging property values, the EPA insists there is no danger. The agency has ignored repeated calls to relocate the townsfolk, who have few allies in high places. **Impossible Town** chronicles Dr. Ayne Amjad's mission to relocate the residents of Minden, West Virginia to 97 acres of land she purchased with the intent of building a new community from the ground up. It is an impossible dream—but one that represents the only decisive solution for a community with nowhere else to turn.



“IZ”

Director: Jennifer Akana Sturla

Embodying a physicality that reflected his land and his people's suffering, beloved indigenous Hawaiian musician Israel “IZ” Kamakawiwo‘ole, the “Hawaiian Bob Marley,” rose above his position in society through his influential music but died before his medley “Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World” became a massive international hit. Born in 1959, the same year Hawaii became the 50th U.S. state, IZ came to represent a quintessentially Hawaiian life. His was an experience of historical trauma, the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of generations caused by traumatic events. Yet his music brought joy to all. He created popular political music before dying at over 700 pounds and just 38 years of age. Connecting non-native Hawaiians with the experience of being Hawaiian, where culture, land, song, and community are a unified experience, the beauty and generosity of Israel's voice is a connective, generative moment for audiences around the world.

RICO

A MODERN GANGSTER TALE



RICO

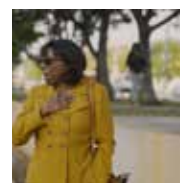
Director: Lindsay Ofrias

Collaborators: Leo Cerda (Producer)

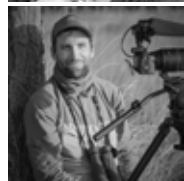
When a group of Amazonian villagers set out to remedy one of the largest oil spills in history, they never expected to face charges of organized crime in the United States for their action. **RICO** is the untold story of how, after winning a landmark multibillion-dollar lawsuit, these villagers and their international allies became legally branded as part of a conspiratorial plot against a major U.S. corporation. As the story unfolds in real time, **RICO** shows precedent in the making that has serious implications for democracy, the environment, and communities across the world.



A landmark multibillion-dollar legal victory against the U.S.-based corporation Chevron initially brought quick comparisons to David overcoming Goliath. However, the afterglow of the Ecuadorians' win quickly faded. Not only did Chevron refuse to pay the judgment, they also went after the farmers, indigenous communities, and their lawyers. Once international heroes for their fearless pursuit of justice, Ecuadorians soon gained the unfortunate distinction as the first social justice advocates to be successfully sued under the U.S. law designed to punish organized crime: the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. Before long, other fossil fuel companies caught on, hired their own legal hitmen, and launched similar attacks in the U.S. against environmentalists. The trend poses a significant threat and is largely unknown due to intimidation tactics and gag orders.



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LAND

Biruté

Path of the Panther

Untitled Cultural Fire Film

Razing Liberty Square

The Park

Land is where the rubber meets the road. Where we can most easily see the ways we are reliant upon, and interdependent with—beholden to and caretakers of—the Earth and its inhabitants. These films show us what's at stake, and what we can do right now, to improve the lives of urban and rural dwellers—human, plant, and animal alike.



Biruté

Director: Toby Gad

Collaborators: Talain Blancheon (Main Editor, Actor)

It is 1971, deep in the rainforest of Borneo, twenty-five-year-old Biruté and her husband Rod settle in an abandoned nipa hut to study wild orangutans. Cut off from the world, they share five sets of clothes and subsist on rice, onions, and cold coffee. Soon after their arrival, Biruté rescues and raises baby orangutan Sugito. With Sugito clinging onto her, she braves the swamp forest and makes groundbreaking discoveries on orangutan behavior. Years pass and Biruté becomes accepted by locals as one of their own, known in Indonesia as the official guardian of orangutans. As deforestation accelerates, hundreds of orphaned orangutans are brought to her. She establishes a camp for orangutan rehabilitation and research, Camp Leakey. But the battle with timber and palm oil syndicates is just beginning.



Path of the Panther

Director: Eric Bendick

Collaborators: Carlton Ward Jr., (Cinematographer), Tori Linder (Impact Producer)



Path of the Panther follows the story of the female panther, the first to arrive in the U.S. in nearly half-a-century. For the crusaders on the path to save this species, the clock is ticking to reveal its never-before-seen natural history. The panther is the keystone in an ancient web of biodiversity stretching across hundreds of miles, the last guardian standing in the way of a surge of new roads and development that will transform the vast Northern Everglades into cookie-cutter suburbia forever. Here, on the front lines of a struggle resonating across the globe, battle lines are being drawn, territory marked. But what if our fates are intertwined?





Untitled Cultural Fire Film

Director: Benjamin Huguet

Collaborators: Jacob Thomas (Producer)



Every year California is devastated by gigantic wildfires intensified by global warming, but an ancient indigenous practice offers a solution. **The Untitled Cultural Fire Film** documents the revival of “indigenous burning”— the management of forest ecosystems with fire that was widespread in California before being outlawed by European settlers. Today, in response to climate change, three native communities of the Klamath Mountains—the Hoopa, the Karuk and the Yurok—are working with local authorities to restore the practice of controlled forest fires, to bring “fire back to the land” and change the narrative around fire in California to encourage a more equitable and just relationship between peoples and nature.



RAZING LIBERTY SQUARE

Razing Liberty Square

Director: Katja Esson

Collaborators: Ann Bennet (Producer)



Razing Liberty Square is a feature-length documentary that follows the redevelopment of a historic African American public housing project in Miami and its impact on long-time residents. Miami is ground zero for sea level rise and elevation becomes real estate gold as the rich must move inland from the low-lying beaches. When residents of Miami's infamous Liberty Square public housing project learn about a \$300-million-dollar revitalization project, they brace themselves against gentrification. What they don't know is that the sudden interest is because their neighborhood is located on the highest and driest ground in Miami. But a young, local climate activist is ready to fight this new form of racial injustice: Climate Gentrification. Bridging climate and housing justice, **Razing Liberty Square** looks to hold Liberty Square Rising developers and Miami-Dade County officials accountable. It spotlights a fearless group of young, Black people fighting for their seat at the table.



The Park

Director: Irene Chin

Collaborators: Kurt Vincent (Co-director)

A nature four-part docuseries about human nature, **The Park** is an intimate and lyrical portrait of one year in Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York. The film illuminates how the park is vital to an immense and diverse population by providing free and open space with access to nature.



In the second week of March 2020, as New York City shut down to fight the spread of COVID-19, people began flocking to parks. Photos showing thousands gathering in Prospect Park went viral, revealing how imperative city parks are to the physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of city residents. Adrian Benepe, director of national programs for The Trust for Public Land and former New York City Parks Commissioner said, "We are living at a moment of existential crisis for parks, as they have never been more needed or appreciated, while paradoxically, parks have never being more under threat. The goals for this film include connecting politicians to the importance of city parks, get more people engaged with their park, boost park budgets, offer community screenings in the park, and more.

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Stay in Touch

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