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Film Festival Reveals Final Judges for 2017 Competition

JACKSON, Wyo. - August 30th, 2017 — With just a few weeks to go before the 2017 Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival, the final judges have been selected, and viewings have begun to determine this year's winners in each category.

"We had almost 1,000 entries for 23 awards — our biggest competition yet," said Lisa Samford, Executive Director of Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. "One hundred and fifty preliminary judges screened over 3,500 hours of media to come up with this prestigious slate of finalists. By selecting the winners in each category, our five final judges will allow us to celebrate the most innovative and outstanding work from around the world."

The final judges include award-winning documentary filmmakers, a live television presenter, accomplished writers and more. The five judges are:

- Senior leader in media, conservation efforts and entertainment **Clark Bunting**. Bunting currently sits as the President and General Manager of Discovery Channel, where he oversees the flagship network now reaching nearly 101 million subscribers in the U.S.
- Documentary filmmaker **Carol L. Fleisher**. Over the last 40 years, her work has earned her countless awards, including the Emmy Award-winning film, "Why Dogs Smile and Chimpanzees Cry," a Writer's Guild of America Award, a CableAce Award for Best Documentary Series, and others.
- Producer, writer and live television presenter **Philippa Forrester** - a media expert with almost three decades of experience in the UK on high profile, large audience, primetime television. She runs Halcyon Media with her husband and most recently has presented the popular BBC 2 mini-series "Harvest."
- Pioneer of natural history documentary filmmaking **Neil Harraway** - a founding member of TVNZ's Natural History Unit in 1977. He directed and produced many Wild South documentaries which sold globally, and after 40 years in TV, Harraway was recently reborn as a wildlife tourism operator, showing guests southern ocean creatures.

- Professor and documentary producer **Gianna Savoie**. With nearly twenty years of experience in Natural History filmmaking under her belt and a penchant for powerful storytelling, her Emmy-nominated work has been featured on PBS, NATURE, National Geographic, Discovery, NHNZ, and the BBC, as well as in theatrical documentaries and in print and web publications.

Each judge was carefully considered and chosen for their expertise in the wildlife filmmaking field. For full judge descriptions, visit our website at www.jhfestival.org/2017-judges.

“The final judges represent the heart and soul of the festival. And because they will have been screening our finalists throughout August and September before they arrive, we are all on the edge of our seats to see what they decide,” Samford said.

Winners will be revealed at the Grand Teton Awards Gala in Jackson, Wyo, on Thursday, Sept. 28, 2017. The awards are just one part of the six-day industry conference hosted at the Jackson Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park from Sept. 24 to 29. Those attending include innovative filmmakers, organizations, scientists, journalists and visionaries from across the globe; all engaged in conservation, nature, wildlife and media.

The Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and gala takes place during a week of critical importance in the industry: the Festival and The Cat Conservation Summit. The events of the JHWFF attract a world-class audience and participation from key influencers in the conservation community. Again this year, a series of community screenings in Jackson are planned. For more information, tickets, sponsorship, or conference attendance, please call 307-733-7016 or visit www.jhfestival.org.

About JHWFF: Recognized as the premier event of its genre, the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival is an unparalleled biennial industry gathering. Hosted in Grand Teton National Park, over 750 international delegates participate in an exceptional slate of leading-edge equipment presentations, seminars and state-of-the-art screenings.

The Festival’s international board members include: Animal Planet, BBC Studios Natural History Unit, Discovery Channel, Disneynature, FujiFilm Optical Devices/Fujinon Lenses, Gorongosa Foundation, HHMI/Tangled Bank Studios, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Nat Geo WILD, National Geographic Society, The Nature Conservancy, Nature, Thirteen/WNET, Off the Fence Productions, PBS, Sony Electronics, Terra Mater Factual Studios/Cinemater, The Science Channel, Swedish Television, UNIVERSUM/ORF, VER, Vulcan Productions, WGBH, and World Wildlife Fund.

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