

New Light Media
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Note to editors: Images available at:

<http://www.lostlandscapefilm.com>

http://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/americas_lost_landscape

<http://www.uni.edu/pubrel/newsroom/photos/oShields.jpg>

<http://www.uni.edu/pubrel/newsroom/photos/DarylSmith.jpg>

Award-winning film coming to PBS on Sunday, April 1 at 9:00pm CDT
***America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie* explores America's**
changing landscape

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa -- The ecology, cultural shift and agricultural revolution that transformed America's prairies are as complex and intertwined as the tallgrass prairie ecosystem itself. On April 1, PBS will nationally air the rich and complex story of one of the most astonishing alterations of nature in human history with a 9 p.m. CDT broadcast of **America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie**.

America's Lost Landscape is a production of New Light Media and was produced in association with the Tallgrass Prairie Center at the University of Northern Iowa.

Daryl Smith, University of Northern Iowa biology professor and director of the UNI Tallgrass Prairie Center, was executive producer of this award-winning feature-length documentary that traces the prairie's transformation from natural landscape to farmland. Critically acclaimed actress Annabeth Gish narrated the film. UNI alumnus and owner of Splice Here, a full-service post-production company in Minneapolis, Clayton Condit edited the film.

"Before I became involved in this project, I could only find films that told part of the tallgrass prairie story," Smith said. "I believe the natural history, ecology, civic history, cultural perspectives, agricultural use and prairie preservation, restoration and reconstruction for the future are all interrelated. As we worked on the film, I became even more convinced that everyone should know about this vanishing -- or lost -- landscape."

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While making the film-festival circuit for **America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie**, the film's writer, director and co-producer David O'Shields of New Light Media found most people, regardless of background or geographical location, are intrigued by the prairie narrative.

"The remaining remnants of tallgrass prairie are a national treasure, and are just as important as the tropical rain forests in South America or the redwoods in California," O'Shields said. "The prairie has a uniqueness and a stature that's worthy of understanding and appreciation. The reality is that very few Americans know what a prairie is. They confuse topography of the plains with the grasses and wildflowers that comprise the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. I hope viewers will come to understand that the prairie ecosystem can be a model -- an approach to building and maintaining a sustainable civilization -- that may lead of us out of the environmental mess we find ourselves in today. Prairie can be a great teacher. All we have to do is listen and act intelligently."

The film's photography and narrative give viewers a glimpse of what was, what is and what can be the tallgrass prairie. Smith hopes after the broadcast, viewers will consider how the prairie fits into our future.

"I want people to become aware of this ecosystem and consider the prairie in relation to their cultural and biological heritage and be aware of how little remains," he said. "I take pride in raising the level of prairie consciousness so more people are interested in protecting and restoring the prairie. Getting more people involved and making prairie conservation and restoration a higher priority for our society bode well for the future."

Clayton Condit of Splice Here, the film's editor and a native of the Midwest, found his involvement in the project to be a consciousness-raising experience.

"To lose the tallgrass prairie is a transformation that happened in an unbelievable short amount of time and that only emphasizes the impact humans have on this planet," he said. With global warming and other environmental issues it as important as ever for people to understand our history and the scale of the impact we can have - both positive and negative."

Condit enjoyed the challenge of crafting a documentary narrative and the collaborative approach taken by David O'Shields.

"David is a great director and producer -- very organized. He has a clear idea of what he wants yet trusted me and everyone at Splice Here to do what they do best," Condit said. He would give me very thorough notes and suggestions and then gave me space and time to experiment and help flesh out his ideas and take some of them even further. The process of editing a documentary is very much an evolution and discovery process. What sound bites work together? How can we shuffle the story and images to better tell the story, etc? David and I worked very well together and came up with a great piece that we will both be proud of as a major success in our careers."

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Annabeth Gish, who lived in Iowa between the ages of 2 and 18, said she is proud to be a part of this film -- a meditation on the prairie and an opportunity to educate and advocate for the land on which she spent her formative years.

"I remember my father and me taking our dog for long walks. Sometimes we'd go along farm fields, but we also would explore the area's prairies like UNI's restored prairie. But even then I'm not sure I understood the significance of the prairie until I worked on this film," Gish said. "The film gives a transcendent and lyrical voice to the prairie, and I hope anyone who sees it falls in love with the land."

America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie premiered at a special showing at UNI in April 2004 and made its Des Moines debut that December. In March 2005 the film aired on Iowa Public Television during its "Festival 2005" fundraising special. Among numerous screenings and awards, the film received the International Documentary Association's Pare Lorentz Award in Los Angeles in 2005 and the CINE Golden Eagle Award in Washington, D.C., in July 2006.

For more information about the film, and to view the trailer and PBS promo, visit www.lostlandscapefilm.com.

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America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie credits:

Written and directed by: David O'Shields

Executive Producer: Daryl Smith

Produced by: David O'Shields and Daryl Smith

Narrated by: Annabeth Gish

Voices: Eileen Schuyler, John Trudell and Murphy Guyer

Director of Photography: William Carlson

Edited by: Clayton Condit

Music by: Brian Keane

Sound Recording: Bill Carlson, Bill Crawford, Matt Quast and John C. Warner

Sound Design and Music Editing: Keith Chirgwin

America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie festival screenings and awards:

Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, Hot Springs, Ark., October 2006
Screening Award

Vermont International Film Festival, Burlington, Vt., October 2006
Finalist Best Environmental Film
Ben and Jerry Award

Tallgrass Film Festival, Wichita, Kan., October 2006
Official Selection

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Ekotopfilm 2006 International Film Festival, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, October 2006

Best Natural Science Film

Montana CINE 2006 International Film Festival, Missoula, Mont., October 2006

Focus Award

Merit Award for Photography

Max Allen Collins Film Expo, Waterloo, Iowa, September 2006

Official Selection

Napa Sonoma Wine Country Film Festival, American Canyon, Calif., August 2006

Best Documentary Feature/Eco-Cinema

Washington, D.C., July 2006

CINE Golden Eagle Award

International Wildlife Film Festival, Missoula, Mont., May 2006

Merit Award for Editing

United Nations Documentary Film Festival, New York, April 2006

Official Selection

Hazel Wolf Environmental Film Festival, Seattle, March 2006

Best of the Fest -- Top Five

Omaha Film Festival, Omaha, Neb., March 2006

Official Selection

International Documentary Association Awards, Los Angeles, December 2005

Pare Lorentz Award

DocuFest, Los Angeles, December 2005

Official Selection

American Conservation Film Festival, Shepherdstown, W.Va., October 2005

Official Selection

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Wild Rose Film Festival, Des Moines, Iowa, October 2005

Best Cinematography

Best Original Music

Best Sound

Best Film Award of Merit for Direction

Best Film Award of Merit for Writing

Best Film Award of Merit for Documentary

EarthVision International Environmental Film and Video Festival, Santa Cruz,
Calif., September 2005

Katherine A. Knight Award

Iowa Motion Picture Awards, Des Moines, Iowa, May 2005

Best Screenwriting

Best Cinematography

Best Editing

Best Sound Editing

Award of Merit for Direction

Award of Merit for Music

Award of Merit for Documentary

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