

# The Wisdom to Survive

Climate Change, Capitalism & Community

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## Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

**Roll out the red carpet!** Use your film screening of THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE as a tool to build community and spark discussion about the state of our planet and what we can do to preserve it. This guide offers some background information plus helpful tips & discussion questions for an informative, and rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit [thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/wts\\_resources](http://thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/wts_resources)

## About THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE

**THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE** accepts the consensus of scientists that climate change has already arrived, and asks, what is keeping us from action? The film explores how unlimited growth and greed are destroying the life support system of the planet, the social fabric of the society, and the lives of billions of people. Will we have the wisdom to survive? The film features thought leaders and activists in the realms of science, economics and spirituality discussing how we can evolve and take action in the face of climate disruption. They urge us to open ourselves to the beauty that surrounds us and get to work on ensuring it thrives.



## About the Directors



As a producer of radio and TV programming in the 1960s, John Ankele used mass media to empower faith communities advocating for civil rights and against the Vietnam War. As an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church and as a student in the zen and Shambhala Buddhist traditions, he has been involved for many years in interfaith dialogue around contemplative practice and social justice. Anne Macksoud spent 17 years as a teacher before transitioning to film and video production. She approaches filmmaking from the perspective of an artist as well as an educator.

# ready to watch!

## Here are some ideas and best practices to help make your community screening of THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE a success!

- 1. Publicize Your Event!** This is the most important step because it not only tells the world what you're up to, but it lets the Bullfrog Community team know what your plans are so we can help you publicize your event. Visit <http://thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/> to register and get the word out on your THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE screening.
- 2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening of THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion about empowering yourselves as a community to become agents of change through peaceful civil disobedience. Or, you can simply provide an opportunity for families to watch and learn together.
- 3. Where To Host?** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating a community film screening of the size you anticipate: downtown movie theaters, churches and synagogues, town halls, community centers, public libraries, school auditoriums, warehouses at a business and outdoor screenings at parks and playgrounds, and even private homes have been venues for many successful community screenings.
- 4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on this issue in your community. Do you know of groups and organizations who support peaceful civil disobedience in defense of our planet? Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Speak on a panel discussion after the screening? Some potential partners include: environmental, law, and sustainable studies departments at universities and colleges, student groups, high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, museums, parks, nature centers, environmental groups, human rights and social groups, small-business owners and other organizations concerned about the environment and a livable, sustainable future.
- 5. Invite A Guest Speaker!** Guest speakers and panels are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are engaged and thinking about the issues they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact local activist and environmental groups, park directors, and teachers and professors who have expertise or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend and participate in a discussion or Q&A session.
- 6. Engage Your Audience!** Included in this handout is a section called Ready to Act! which is meant to be a hand-out at your screening. It will help your audience know what they can do to educate themselves about key issues brought up in the film.
- 7. Spread The Word!** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing the film screening to people in your community. Sending emails, creating event notifications on Facebook or Meetup, using Twitter, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. Find the THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE screening poster, discussion guide (includes handout), and press photos on [thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/wts\\_resources](http://thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/wts_resources) to help publicize your event around town.
- 8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit <http://thewisdomtosurvive.bullfrogcommunities.com/> to tell us about your event: Where it was held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? Your feedback will help others in organizing their own successful events and will energize Bullfrog Communities as a whole.

# ready to talk!

**Your audience will be excited to discuss the issues raised by THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE. Here are some questions that will get people talking.**

1. What was your overall response to this film? What struck you most? Who impressed you most?
2. The first words of the film are a quote from Dostoevsky: “The world will be saved by beauty.” What does Dostoevsky mean by this? Do you think it’s just a romantic notion or is there truth in it?
3. Eco-philosopher Joanna Macy says “Mainstream society doesn’t want to hear about our sorrow for what’s happening to life on earth; that gets reduced to a personal pathology.” Do you feel sorrow for what’s happening to life on earth? If so, how does that sorrow manifest? Do you feel free to express it? How do you manage it?
4. Biologist Stephanie Kaza says that if we look directly at the suffering in the world and really take it in, the “opportunities for action will arise.” The implication of this statement is that if we continue to “look away” or detach from the suffering all around us, there will be no opportunity for action. What does she mean? Do you agree with her? Why?
5. Activist Bill McKibben says “Everything we do all day relies on fossil fuel; it’s what made us rich. The problem is the same fossil fuel is now killing us.” Is there a solution to such a vast problem? What will it take for humans to change course? Do you see a way for you to be personally involved in some aspect of the change that needs to happen?
6. Whale Biologist Roger Payne says “I fear you can just kiss goodbye the beauty of coral reefs; I don’t think that is something that our great grandchildren will see except in films.” Does that matter to you? Why? Is it realistic to think we can address something that will happen in the future when our lives are so full and challenging in the present?
7. Bill McKibben says that rich nations will have to provide money and technology for emerging nations like India and China, so that they will be able to develop without the use of coal and other fossil fuels. Do you think that the rich nations will do this? What will it take to have the developed world come to the aid of the developing world in this way?
8. McKibben also says “I am always well aware that the world around us is not going to be any more beautiful or intact than it is right now.” What is he really saying here? How does his statement make you feel?
9. Joanna Macy has said that the flaw in our thinking that has led us to where we are now is “imagining that we are separate from nature.” And energy scholar Richard Heinberg says that the antidote to killing ourselves and killing “the ground of our being” is to get back in touch “with our deep, primary, fundamental connection to what it is that makes us living beings.” What do they mean? What is that we have lost connection with? Do you lose touch with it? How do you reconnect? How could it be that the disconnection is “killing us”?
10. Do you feel, as Rev. Daniel Jantos says, that it is the young people who will be able to “bring us around as quickly as it can be done”? Do you share his faith in the next generation? How can we support them? How can you support them?

- 11.** We see in the film (in India, South America and Africa) that the people suffering most from the impact of climate change are the poor, the people who did not cause the problem. What can be done about this injustice? What can you do about it?
- 12.** There is a growing consensus among the interviewees in this film (and in the wider society) that it is the economic system of Capitalism, with its need to expand at all costs, that is destroying nature faster than nature can recover. Do you agree with this? If not, why? If so, what can be done about it? What can you do about it?
- 13.** Joanna Macy believes that Capitalism is destroying itself “at the core,” and that we need to build new systems “in the shell of the old.” Do you think we can build new systems that will change the way we live on earth? What will it take? Will we do it? How can you be involved in that change?
- 14.** What views do Navajo leaders express about the life of Earth and our connection to it?
- 15.** Stephanie Kaza speaks about the “Deep View” of life, using Chinese scroll paintings to illustrate her point – that what we cannot see “in the realm of the imagination is infinite. It has all possibility in it.” What is she implying? Do you think that the imagination is an essential “tool” that can be used to “save us”? Discuss.
- 16.** Permaculturist Ben Falk implies that it’s just a matter of time before we will not be able to feed ourselves in the way we have done (by shipping food to supermarkets from all over the world.) Is your community preparing for this change? How can you be involved in securing food for your region?
- 17.** Activist Anya Kamanskaya and the other young people from Occupy the Farm are “planting illegally” because the University of California will not allow them to use the land for urban agriculture. They believe that public land administered by a public institution should be available for needed projects. Anya quotes a colleague who says, “If it’s the right thing to do, you have every right to do it.” Do you agree with this?
- 18.** How do you think this story is going to end? Do we really have any control over the outcome? Do you think about what is “coming down the pike?” How do you integrate those thoughts? Is there need for revolution? Do you think there will be one? Will you be part of it?
- 19.** Do you feel changed by anything you saw or heard in this film?

# ready to act!

handout

Share this handout with your  
**THE WISDOM TO SURVIVE** screening audience!

## **Energy**

Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, says, “The thing that is at the heart of our daily lives is the abundance of cheap fossil fuel. For 200 years it has defined what it means to be a Western human being. Everything we do all day relies on fossil fuel. It’s what made us rich. The problem is that the same fossil fuel is now killing us. So somehow we have to get off the thing that is at the center of our daily lives before it does us in. That is a very, very difficult task; the most difficult task that humans have ever faced.”

The extraction and burning of fossil fuels is increasing the amount of carbon and methane in the atmosphere and carbonic acid in our oceans. Oil spills and other disasters further pollute the environment and exacerbate climate change. An increase in global average temperature due to greenhouse gas emissions changes climates and increases the variability of weather and both extremes of the water cycle. Extreme weather events have increased in frequency, oceans are warming, and sea levels are rising. There could be dire consequences for humans and animals as ecosystems collapse.

However, there is hope in next-generation energy. University of Vermont evolutionary biologist Amy Seidl says, “My excitement about these 21st-century technologies that may arrive is that in June, July, August, we have more sun by 9 AM than we could use all day. There is so much energy hitting the earth from the sun, in one hour the photons of light energy can fuel the world’s economy for a year, for a year. One hour of sunlight.”

1. Use less energy. Use public transportation, bike and walk when you can, car pool, use energy-efficient light bulbs, insulate your home, “green” your home and office, and reduce, reuse, recycle.
2. Encourage local institutions (schools, churches, universities, hospitals, etc.) and business to do the same.
3. Help others in your community, who don’t have the means, to make their homes energy-efficient too.
4. Oppose projects and policies in your community geared towards the extraction, transportation and burning of fossil fuels, including oil, tar sands oil, natural gas and the process of fracking, coal and mountain-top removal, and pipelines.
5. Support projects and policies in your community geared towards renewable energy alternatives, such as solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, micro-hydro and wave power as well as biofuel and biomass fuels.
6. Resources:

**350.org** <http://www.350.org>

International effort to raise awareness of the need to decrease carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million.

## **Economics**

The industrial growth model is inherently unsustainable. Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow at the Post Carbon Institute, says, that “nothing grows forever on a finite planet.” Bill McKibben points out that inequality is at an all-time high. Rita Zanotto, Landless Workers’ Movement, La Via Campesina, says, “It is Capitalism’s drive for profit that is destroying the world.” Environmental lawyer, teacher, author, and activist James Gustave Speth, says, “We’re going to have to change the system we’re working in.” Joanna Macy says, “The industrial growth society is destroying itself. ... We have to build and let emerge new sustainable ways of doing things. Building the new in the shell of the old. ... Build living economies. ...” By supporting local businesses, including those where workers have a stake in ownership, and local farmers, projects and “green jobs,” you keep money and jobs in the community, while simultaneously lifting citizens out of poverty, making your community more resilient.

1. Build and support local stores, businesses and business networks, so that money earned stays in the community.
2. Build and support cooperative businesses and democratic workplaces that are tied to place, that build local economy and keep jobs in the community.
3. Use public transportation and encourage and support local infrastructure and public-transportation improvement projects and jobs.
4. Start, encourage and support “green” businesses and jobs in your community, including job training and re-training, renewable and clean energy jobs (solar, wind, etc.), green building, energy-efficiency improvement projects, organic jobs, and all other environmental and sustainable jobs. James Gustave Speth says, “We ought to be creating a half a million jobs a month in this country now. “
5. Support local farmers, farmers’ markets, local food distributors, local cafés and restaurants.
6. Resources:

### **Business for Local Living Economies** <https://bealocalist.org/>

BALLE provides a national forum for visionary local economy leaders and funders to connect, build their capacity, and innovate. BALLE was founded in 2001 to nurture and curate the emergence of a new economy – one that will gradually displace our destructive and failing economy with a system that supports the health, prosperity, and happiness for all people and regenerates the vital ecosystems upon which our economy depends. With a focus on real change within a generation, BALLE works to identify and connect pioneering leaders, spread solutions, and attract investment toward local economies. By connecting leaders, spreading solutions, and attracting investment toward local economies, BALLE advances the Localist Movement to create real prosperity for all. Within a generation, we envision a global system of human-scale, interconnected local economies that function in harmony with local ecosystems to meet the basic needs of all people, support just and democratic societies, and foster joyful community life.

### **Climate Justice Alliance (CJA)** <http://www.ourpowercampaign.org>

A collaborative of over 35 community-based and movement support organizations uniting frontline communities to forge a scalable, and socio-economically just transition away from unsustainable energy towards local living economies to address the root causes of climate change.

### **New Economy Coalition** <http://neweconomy.net>

The mission of the New Economy Coalition is to build a New Economy that prioritizes the well-being of people and the planet.

Resources related to cooperatives from another film from Bullfrog Communities, **SHIFT CHANGE: PUTTING DEMOCRACY TO WORK**, which tells the little-known stories of employee-owned businesses that compete successfully in today's economy while providing secure, dignified jobs in democratic workplaces. [http://shiftchange.bullfrogcommunities.com/shift\\_resources](http://shiftchange.bullfrogcommunities.com/shift_resources)

## **Food and Farming**

Large-scale mono-crop industrial agriculture uses vast amounts of water, petro-chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, which deplete carbon in the soil and damage land and water resources. Organic, sustainable and agroecological approaches to farming (like permaculture) can maintain and improve soil health and sequester carbon. According to Olivier de Shutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, agroecological approaches to farming could double food production in entire regions in ten years and combat climate change. Permaculturalist Ben Falk says, "I think of 'permaculture' as simply regeneration – a force for regeneration. Permaculture comes from the words permanent culture – permanent agriculture and permanent culture. But the idea is simply that the human presence is beneficial. We're not trying to ignore our presence in the system or minimize our impact, but actually make intentional eco-systems, intentional ecologies. We have to create these systems before we truly do need them. We look forward and adapt to conditions before those conditions are dire enough that we are just forced to do that in an emergency – forced to depend on food that is grown in our region or fuel that is produced in our region. The core of the challenge in my mind: how do we act adaptively before we are forced to."

1. Build and support community gardens that build community and provide food at low cost. Learn to grow your own food and train others in sustainable gardening and farming techniques, including permaculture.
2. Develop and support local and regional food systems from seed to table that mitigate climate change and support local farmers and food businesses. This includes preserving and collecting local seed, protecting farmland, supporting local, organic and family farms, training the next generation of farmers, supporting farmers' markets or creating a new distribution system for local food, starting and supporting local value-added food businesses and local food stores and markets, and getting local businesses and institutions, including schools, hospitals etc. to procure local, healthy food.
3. Oppose local, state and national food policies that subsidize industrial agriculture and food that makes us sick, and support those that favor small-scale and family farmers producing healthy food, such as fruit and vegetables, in your region.
4. Lawrence Mkhalihi, Agroecology Manager at Biowatch – South Africa, says, "Now the corporations, Monsanto and other allies, the giants, are also colonizing Africa and all of us through food, through seed. The Monsanto seed is not only seed. It's a seed with a technology of herbicide, with a technology of insecticides. And these seeds you can only plant it once. You can plant it a second time, but the yields get lower and lower. When you plant it for a third time, you get no crop." Indian scholar and activist Seema Tripathi says, "How will an outsider be able to tell you that his seeds, built in a factory are good for your soil? Has this been made for my soil? There are 12 types of soil found in India, and among those, there are 2,000 diversifications."
 

Protect local and heirloom seeds, seeds that are best adapted to bio-regions, rather than one-size-fits-all GMO seeds. Support others in efforts to protect their seed sovereignty. Support GMO labeling.
5. Rucha Chitnis, South Asia Program Director for the Women's Earth Alliance says, "More than 50% of

our food is grown by women farmers. ... And yet 70% of the world's poor are women and girls. There is so little recognition that is paid to their immense body of knowledge: how to farm organically, how to make natural pesticides, how to make natural fertilizers, how to save seeds, which are the drought resistant [seeds]..."

Support women farmers, organic farmers, family farmers and encourage them to train the next generation of farmers.

#### 6. Resources:

##### **Biowatch South Africa** <http://www.biowatch.org.za>

Publicizes, monitors and researches issues of genetic modification, and promotes biological diversity and sustainable livelihoods.

##### **California Climate and Agriculture Network** <http://calclimateag.org>

A coalition that advances policies to support California agriculture in the face of climate change. Cal-CAN believes that agriculture can play a constructive role in responding to the climate crisis by reducing its carbon footprint and thus help to ensure the long-term viability and security of our food and farming system.

##### **Futurefarmers** <http://www.futurefarmers.com>

Futurefarmers is a group of diverse practitioners aligned through an interest in making work that is relevant to the time and place surrounding us.

##### **La Via Campesina** <http://viacampesina.org/en>

The international movement that brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world and defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity.

##### **Whole Systems Design** <http://www.wholesystemsdesign.com>

Regenerative design, resilient site development, permaculture design, re-skilling courses. Transition training, land and infrastructure for the post peak oil age. Farm design. Food systems development, water security, SHTF planning and preparedness. Root cellar, greenhouse design, secure home design. Resiliency planning & off-grid design. Vermont permaculture farm.

## **Conservation**

Biologist Roger Payne says, "The free services performed by the environment for humankind worldwide come to \$30 trillion a year." It is important to preserve, protect and restore our ecosystems, prevent pollution, and properly steward our natural resources.

1. Support local conservation efforts, projects and policies to protect fish, coastlines, coral reefs, and ocean and river health. Clean up your local beaches, water, land and recreation areas.
2. Support land conservation efforts and protect farmland from development.
3. James Gustave Speth says, "We are creatures here just like all the others, we didn't create them, we have no right to destroy them. We are losing species today at a thousand times the rate that species do normally go extinct."

Support efforts to protect animal habitat and endangered species.

4. Plant trees in your community and support sustainable forestry practices. Trees help pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

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5. Resources:

**Black Mesa Water Coalition** <http://www.blackmesawatercoalition.org>

Black Mesa Water Coalition is dedicated to preserving and protecting Mother Earth and the integrity of Indigenous Peoples' cultures, with the vision of building sustainable and healthy communities.

**Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)** <http://www.nrdc.org>

Works to safeguard the earth — its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends.

**Women's Earth Alliance** <http://www.womensearthalliance.org>

Invests in grassroots women's leadership to drive solutions to our most pressing ecological concerns – water, food, land, and climate.

**Divestment**

The industrial growth model, which puts profits before people, is driven by investment in fossil fuels. James Gustave Speth says, "It's not like, 'Oh, now we recognize there's a problem but we don't know what to do about it.' We do know what to do about it. We need to transform our energy system. We ought to be creating a half a million jobs a month in this country now. There are all these huge technological innovations that could be pursued but it helps to have a real price on carbon to do that."

1. If you are invested in fossil fuel and petro-chemical companies, divest.
2. Encourage your university and other local institutions to divest from fossil fuels.
3. Encourage a tax on carbon and stop subsidizing fossil fuel.
4. Invest in renewables infrastructure.
5. Resources:

**Divest-Invest** <http://divestinvest.org>

A worldwide movement to divest from fossil fuels and invest in a sustainable and clean energy economy.

**Go Local**

Stephanie Kaza, Professor, UVM, Environment Program says, "We can be most thoroughly in the place that we are." By building resilient local food, energy and businesses and by opposing projects and policies that would damage our local resources and communities, we create resilient communities that mitigate climate change.

1. Support local food and community gardens  
Support local and regional food systems that provide food to the community, that protect farmland, protect soil health, sequester carbon, and support local family farmers.
2. Support local renewable energy projects  
Provide low-cost energy that mitigates climate change and creates jobs
3. Support local businesses

Keep money in the community and create sustainable jobs and businesses.

4. Support local conservation efforts and good stewardship of resources
5. Resources:

**Post Carbon Institute** <http://www.postcarbon.org>

Assists societies in their efforts to relocalize communities and adapt to an energy-constrained world.

**Resilience.org** <http://www.resilience.org>

Both an information clearinghouse and a network of action-oriented groups with a focus on building community resilience in a world of multiple emerging challenges: the decline of cheap energy, the depletion of critical resources like water, complex environmental crises like climate change and biodiversity loss, and the social and economic issues which are linked to these.

**Transition US** <http://www.TransitionUS.org>

Transition US is a nonprofit organization that provides inspiration, encouragement, support, networking, and training for Transition Initiatives across the United States, and works in close partnership with the Transition Network, a UK based organization that supports the international Transition Movement as a whole. The Transition Movement is a vibrant, grassroots movement that seeks to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis. It represents one of the most promising ways of engaging people in strengthening their communities against the effects of these challenges, resulting in a life that is more abundant, fulfilling, equitable and socially connected.

## **Making Connections**

Roberto Nutlouis, Green Economy Coordinator for the Black Mesa Water Coalition, says, “We’ve released this energy force of carbon. How does that interact with the energy forces up in the skies? The sky in all of its wonders has this energy. When we pollute or when we disrupt that natural force by our action, it creates an imbalance within that element, within the universe, and also within ourselves.”

Eco-philosopher and activist Joanna Macy says, “As we speak the truth of our pain for the world, we discover our interconnectedness with each other.” Stephanie Kaza says, “It’s time for us to learn how to be allies where people are speaking different kinds of truths. ...I am a small piece of a very large web. ...This deep view of life is sometimes called systems thinking. ...A person who acts with awareness that actions are always in a web of relations behaves much differently than someone who sees themselves as the center all the time.” Rucha Chitnis says, “There is movement building around the world and what you are seeing is that the movements are connecting, so that the environmental movement is connecting to the sustainable food justice movement. The food justice movement is connecting to the women’s movement. The women’s movement is connecting to the LGBTQ movement. We simply cannot look at these problems in silos.” Joanna Macy says, “If you want an adventure, boy, what a time to choose to be alive, to get a chance to find out what you have inside you in terms of vitality and alertness and courage, what you have to discover in terms of what we can do together. Don’t waste time in self-pity over darkness. Don’t waste time trying to figure out better circumstances that you might like. You are born into this, and you are here to love it and to see that it goes on.”

1. Recognize your connection to the natural world and begin with personal responsibility.
2. Recognize your connection to others around you and start to make connections. Support others in your community. Share knowledge and lend a helping hand.

3. Support local business and local efforts to improve your community.
4. Build and support networks of businesses, community groups, and nonprofits.
5. Build ties with other communities and groups working to improve their communities.
6. Scale up, step by step, building community into a new system and an interconnected movement for change.
7. Resources:

**La Via Campesina** <http://viacampesina.org/en>

The international movement that brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world and defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity.

**Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project (MG)** <http://movementgeneration.org>

Inspires and engages in transformative action towards the liberation and restoration of land, labor, and culture. MG is rooted in vibrant social movements led by low-income communities and communities of color committed to a Just Transition away from profit and pollution and towards healthy, resilient and life-affirming local economies.

**Women's Earth Alliance** <http://www.womensearthalliance.org>

Invests in grassroots women's leadership to drive solutions to our most pressing ecological concerns – water, food, land, and climate.

**The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology** <http://fore.research.yale.edu>

The Forum on Religion and Ecology is the largest international multireligious project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website it is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns.