



World Premiere of the Documentary Feature

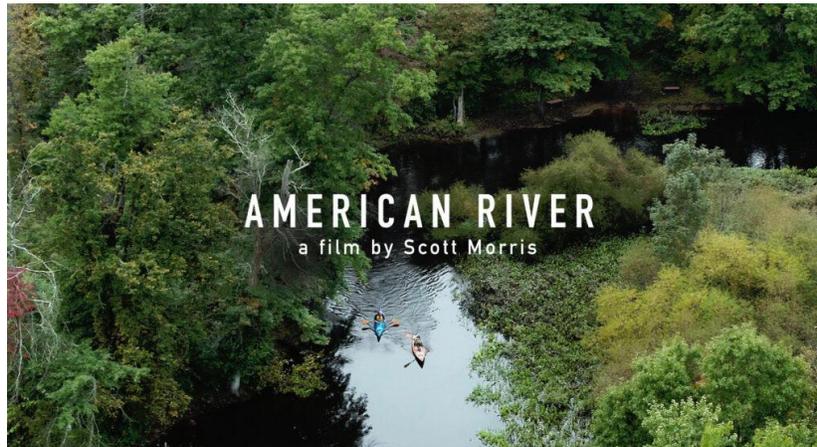
# AMERICAN RIVER

at the 2021 Montclair Film Festival in Montclair, NJ on Oct. 23 & 24 in  
the NJ Films Competition

*Also screening as the Centerpiece Film at Teaneck Film Festival –  
Saturday, November 13 at 8:00 pm*

From NJ-based film team: Director/Producer Scott Morris and Producer Kelly  
Sheehan

**WATCH THE FESTIVAL TRAILER NOW**



**WORLD PREMIERE SCREENINGS IN MONTCLAIR, NJ – BOTH SOLD OUT**

**Saturday, October 23 at 8:00 pm – Clairidge Cinema 4**

*Director Scott Morris and film participants Mary Bruno and Carl Alderson in-person for Q&A.*

&

**Sunday, October 24 at 2:00 pm – Clairidge Cinema 5**

*Director Scott Morris and film participants Mary Bruno and Carl Alderson in-person for Q&A.*

Tickets and more info: <https://montclairfilm.org/events/american-river/>

Screenings co-presented by The Nature Conservancy New Jersey



Photos, captions, and credits available: <http://www.americanriver.film/press/>

### **Synopsis – *The journey will change you.***

Mary Bruno is an aquatic ecologist and writer who spent her childhood afraid of the polluted stretch of the Passaic near her home. Decades later, she returns to kayak the river of her youth and tell its story.

*American River* follows Bruno and guide Carl Alderson on a 4-day, 80 mile adventure down the Passaic River, from its pristine source in a wildlife refuge to its toxic mouth in Newark Bay. The river's extraordinary history, geology and ecology are revealed as the kayakers navigate challenges, travel through urban landscapes and head towards the industrial disaster that has poisoned the Passaic for the past 60 years.

Along the way, candid conversations with residents, experts and advocates bring insight, humor and urgency to the story while answering important questions: How did the Passaic become one of the most contaminated rivers in America? Can it be saved? And what does the future hold for our precious natural resources? The Passaic is an archetype for thousands of rivers across America facing similar reckonings.

### **About the Film and Film Team**

Three years in the making, *American River* was directed by filmmaker Scott Morris and based on Mary Bruno's 2012 book, *An American River: From Paradise to Superfund*. Like the book, the film is a unique blend of personal memoir, adventure, history and science.

The entire journey was captured in grand and intimate scale from the water, land and air by an experienced crew with ten 4K cameras. An original score, animations and graphics, as well as rare archival images enhance the story.

New Jersey-based director/producer Scott Morris's previously directed *Saving The Great Swamp: Battle to Defeat the Jetport*, narrated by Blyth Danner and currently distributed by American Public Television, and *From The Ashes: The Life and Times of Tick Hall* chronicling the history, loss and rebuilding of a landmark home in Montauk, NY owned by talk-show host Dick Cavett and his wife, the actress Carrie Nye.

*American River* is executive produced by S. Dillard Kirby. Additional film team members from the New Jersey/New York include producer Kelly Sheehan, director of photography Roger Grange, consulting editor Keith Reamer, ACE, and production manager Heather E. Quinlan.

### Film Credits

**Runtime:** 86 minutes

### **Director's Statement**

"Many people in urban areas are disconnected from nature, and many films about the natural world are filmed in exotic faraway places. I was drawn to the idea of making a film about a subject that was literally in my own backyard. I live a few blocks from the Passaic River, yet knew nothing about it. How could the obscure waterway I'd cross multiple times while driving with my family in different parts of the state be the same river? Depending where I was, I'd catch glimpses of it flowing in different directions through the clustered landscape of houses, towns and cities. There must be several Passaic Rivers, I thought. And no one seemed to know anything about it...

Until I read Mary Bruno's 2012 book, *An American River: From Paradise to Superfund*. My vision for *American River* would bring together the story of Mary's Bruno's highly personal journey with our mutual love of nature, concern about the environment, and themes of loss and healing I've explored in all my work. She loved the idea of working together on a film and our collaboration grew. I was thrilled to be out on the river during the months of scouting and filming the kayak trip, and delighted when Mary and Carl's friendship and dynamic personalities bloomed as the cameras started rolling. Capturing their can-do attitude, sharp observations and humor adds a wonderful layer to the film's urgent story and gives voice to my optimistic point-of-view. Despite its darker aspects, the film is after all a story of joy, wonder and hope. I invite audiences to discover and celebrate the Passaic River along with me through my experience making this film."

– Scott Morris, September 2021

### **Official Film Website**

<https://www.americanriver.film>

### **Press / Publicity Contact**

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