



# THE NEW ENVIRONMENTALISTS and TULE ELK: THE KILLING OF A NATIVE SPECIES

**CURRICULUM GUIDE**  
GRADES: 6-12



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Dear educators,

Thank you for attending the 44th Annual Mill Valley Film Festival's virtual screening of *The New Environmentalists* and *Tule Elk: The Killing of a Native Species*. This year, our film selections for school screenings continue to focus on increasingly relevant issues of global empathy and active citizenship, and we believe these films will be a powerful and engaging text to use in your classroom.

We know that this year is likely one of the most challenging of your professional career, and we hope that these films and study guide can support the incredible work you're already doing. These curricular materials are designed to get students to engage deeply with film by the common-core aligned skills of developing an evidence-based interpretation of a text.

The discussion questions on the following page offer a variety of options for fostering small-group or whole-class dialogue. If your students are already familiar with a process of writing evidence-based interpretive essays, consider using one of the suggested essay prompts for a short writing piece. Additionally, individual handouts for before, during, and after viewing are provided as stand-alone activities to be used individually or in sequence. We have also included a handout that provides some context for the film festival experience, which may help to introduce your in-class screening.

Thank you so much for your tireless work!

Sincerely,

The CFI Education Team



**CFI EDUCATION**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the central issues addressed in these documentaries? What has changed between the start and the end?
2. What are the primary emotions you felt during these films? What are some secondary emotions?
3. What are some surprising facts you learned from these films? How do these facts shape your understanding of the central issue of the films?
4. Do these documentaries feel objective and/or balanced in their presentation of the issues? Why or why not?
5. What do you see in these films that remind you of other stories from your life or other stories you know?
6. Were there any perspectives relevant to the central issues of the documentaries that were not included? How would those voices have changed the films?
7. Consider other films you've seen. What makes these films unique or important? What are some connections between these films and other films?
8. What were the filmmakers' relationships with the subject? How were they personally connected? How do you think those relationships impacted the style or messages of the films?
9. Which climate activism shown in *The New Environmentalists* is most likely to lead to larger scale change? Why do you think so?
10. Which climate activism shown in the film could you engage in where you live?
11. What were some similarities in the filmmaking style of *The New Environmentalists* and *Tule Elk: The Killing of a Native Species*? What were some differences? Did the films serve different purposes?

## INTERPRETIVE ESSAY PROMPTS

1. How does the size, wealth, or population of a country influence how the people of that country can fight climate change?
2. What actions are people taking around the world to fight for climate justice. Which actions are likely to have the biggest global impact?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### The Goldman Environmental Prize

The prize awarded to the activists featured in *The New Environmentalists*

<https://www.goldmanprize.org/>

### Tule Elk

Additional information on the tule elk from the National Park Service

[https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/nature/tule\\_elk.htm](https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/nature/tule_elk.htm)

### Tule Elk: California's Legacy of Wildness

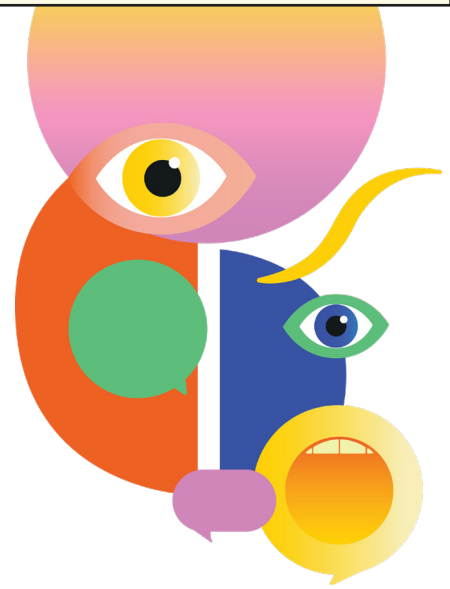
A short documentary from the National Park Service on the tule elk

<https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=D2A39E82-A138-5331-06EC0AE8B0375471>

### Sunrise Movement

A grassroots activist group engaging young people in the fight for climate justice

<https://www.sunrisemovement.org/>



## STANDARDS

HS-ESS3-4 Earth and Human Activity

Evaluate or refine a technological solution that reduces impacts of human activities on natural systems.

MS-ESS3-4 Earth and Human Activity

Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

## ABOUT CFI

The nonprofit California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through year-round programming at the independent Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, presentation of the acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival and DocLands Documentary Film Festival, as well as cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education programs.

### Follow the Mill Valley Film Festival on social media

 @millvalleyfilmfest  @MillValleyFilmFestival  
 @mvfilmfest  californiafilminstitute #MVFF44



Name: \_\_\_\_\_





# ABOUT THE FILMS

## *The New Environmentalists*

This is the latest in the Mill Valley Film Group's Emmy Award®-winning series, narrated by Robert Redford and featuring inspiring portraits of six passionate and dedicated activists from Myanmar, France, Mexico, Ghana, the Bahamas, and Ecuador. They share a common goal: safeguarding the Earth's natural resources from exploitation and pollution, while fighting for justice in their communities. These are the true environmental heroes who have placed themselves squarely in harm's way to battle intimidating adversaries while building strong grassroots support.



## *Tule Elk: The Killing of a Native Species*

This short documentary looks at the heated controversy between conservationists and the National Park Service over the fate of the Tule elk in Point Reyes National Seashore.

# BEFORE VIEWING: MAP ANALYSIS

**Directions:** Before watching the films, study the map on the next page to familiarize yourself with the regions visited in the film, as indicated by the shading. Then, respond to the following questions.

1. **Observe:** What do you notice about the geography of these regions? Are there any geographic features that several of the regions share in common?

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2. **Recall:** What do you know about the ecosystems and climates of the countries/regions shaded on the map?

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3. **Infer:** Based on the geography and provided data, what environmental issues do you think might be affecting each of these locations? Why?

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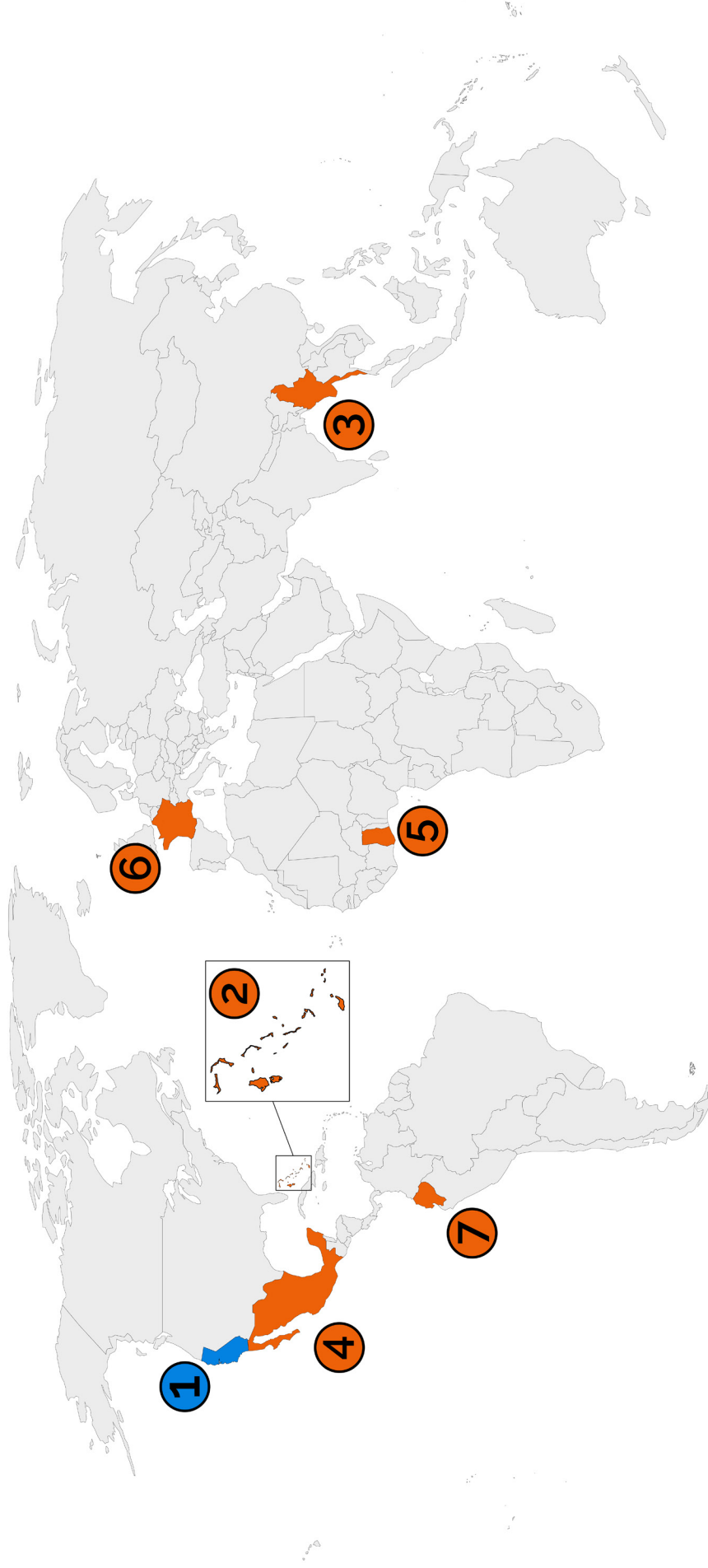
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# THE NEW ENVIRONMENTALISTS MAP



1. California  
Population: 39,500,000  
Land Area: 403,470 km<sup>2</sup>
2. The Bahamas  
Population: 393,000  
Land Area: 10,010 km<sup>2</sup>
3. Myanmar  
Population: 54,410,000  
Land Area: 652,790 km<sup>2</sup>

4. Mexico  
Population: 138,933,000  
Land Area: 1,943,950 km<sup>2</sup>
5. Ghana  
Population: 31,073,000  
Land Area: 227,540 km<sup>2</sup>
6. France  
Population: 67,392,000  
Land Area: 547,557 km<sup>2</sup>

7. Ecuador  
Population: 17,643,000  
Land Area: 248,360 km<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.census.gov>  
<https://data.worldbank.org/>

# DURING VIEWING: NOTECATCHER

**Directions:**

As you watch both films, take notes in each cell to track the environmental challenges and solutions in each featured region.

Location	Problem What was the specific issue impacting the environment?	Action What was done in order to challenge or counter the problem?	Outcome What was the result of the action?	Next Steps What ongoing goals do these activists have or what are they trying to do next?
California				
Bahamas				
Myanmar				



# DURING VIEWING: NOTECATCHER

Location	Problem What was the specific issue impacting the environment?	Action What was done in order to challenge or counter the problem?	Outcome What was the result of the action?	Next Steps What ongoing goals do these activists have or what are they trying to do next?
Mexico				
Ghana				
France				
Ecuador				

# AFTER VIEWING: RESPONSE QUESTIONS

## Directions:

Respond to each question, referring to specific scenes, events, and dialogue from the film as evidence for your interpretation.

1. What were some similarities you noticed between the problems faced by the different countries in the film? Which country do you think had the most unique or creative solution?

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2. Of the various environmental issues addressed in the film, which one felt most similar to a problem in your own community? What was their solution? Could that same solution be effective in your community? Why or why not?

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3. Look at the map again and study the populations of each country. Then, pick one country from the film and describe how the population of that country may have influenced both the problem and solution depicted in the film.

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4. Compare *The New Environmentalists* with the short film *Tule Elk: The Killing of a Native Species*. How did they differ in their purpose or message? How did the style of each film suit its particular message?

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# ABOUT FILM FESTIVALS



An opening night screening at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

## What is a film festival?

A film festival is an event in which multiple movies are presented over the course of one or several days. Depending on the size of the festival, all of the screenings may take place in a single theater or may involve multiple venues throughout a city. Festivals also include special events like panel discussions with filmmakers and actors. Typically, filmmakers submit their works to a festival, where a team of curators selects the best entries for inclusion in the festival. For independent and international filmmakers, festivals are often an important way to raise awareness of a film, generate an audience, and/or attract a studio to purchase the rights to distribute a film in a wider release. Acceptance into a major festival can add significant prestige to a film, with some festival awards (such as the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or) considered among the highest honors a film can receive.

There are many film festivals through-

out the world, with some focusing on particular themes, such as highlighting LGBTQ films/filmmakers, specific cultural groups, or particular genres. While some of the more famous festivals may be in distant locations, there are hundreds of small festivals spread through every corner of the world and, increasingly, festivals are using streaming access to make it easier for the public to view their curated programs.

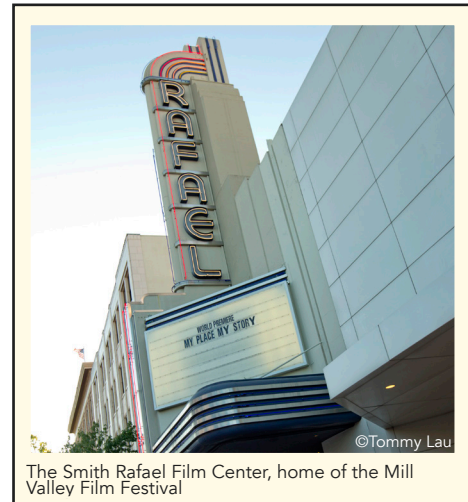
## History of the Mill Valley Film Festival

Since founding the Mill Valley Film Festival in 1977, Executive Director Mark Fishkin has shepherded this once small, three-day showcase into an eleven-day, internationally acclaimed cinema event presenting a wide variety of new films from around the world in an engaged, community setting.

The festival has an impressive track record of launching new films and new filmmakers, and has earned a reputation as a filmmakers' festival

by celebrating the best in American independent and foreign films, alongside high-profile and prestigious award contenders. The relaxed and non-competitive atmosphere surrounding MVFF, gives filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to share their work and experiences in a collaborative and convivial setting.

Each year the festival welcomes more than 200 filmmakers, representing more than 50 countries. Screening sections include world cinema, US cinema, documentaries, family films, and shorts programs. Annual festival initiatives include Active Cinema, a forum for films that aim to engage audiences and transform ideas into action; Mind the Gap, a platform for inclusion and equity; and ¡Viva el Cine!, a showcase of Latin American and Spanish-language films.. Festival guests also enjoy an exciting selection of Tributes, Spotlights and Galas throughout the program.



The Smith Rafael Film Center, home of the Mill Valley Film Festival

## Questions to Consider:

1. What is the purpose of a film festival? What are the benefits for filmmakers? For the audience? For the community?
2. How might the films at a festival differ from the films available to watch at your local movie theater?
3. What qualities do you think festival curators might look for in a film? If you are watching a festival film with a class/school group, what aspects of the film do you think made it appealing to the curators?

## Get Involved!

Many film festivals, including the Mill Valley Film Festival, have student film categories. If you are a filmmaker, explore FilmFreeway ([www.filmfreeway.com](http://www.filmfreeway.com)) for a database of worldwide film festivals where you can submit your film. The call for entries for MVFF opens in late February and closes in June. Youth filmmakers do not have to pay an entry fee. MVFF also offers many opportunities for volunteering. Find out more at <https://www.cafilm.org/volunteer/>.