



American Film Week 2014 Short Documentary Contest!

Produced by the US Embassy and the Luang Prabang Film Festival

Do you know how to use film to get an important message out into your community?

The US Embassy and the Luang Prabang Film Festival are teaming up once again to give local filmmakers a chance to show their passion for filmmaking and skill for inspiring change via the American Film Week's short documentary film contest.

The winners of this contest will have the great opportunity to have their films screened at the American Film Week (October 1-5), in front of thousands of people.

All you have to do is create an original short non-fiction film (no longer than 10 minutes) that supports the protection of wildlife. These submissions can be made by an individual, or a team of filmmakers, and anyone living in Laos is encouraged to make a film. Please see the following page for more information about wildlife protection and the issues around illegal wildlife trade.

When planning your films, think about what wildlife means to you, your country, and your world, and the effects of it being threatened. Why is wildlife important? What would happen if it was all gone? How can we protect wildlife? Whose responsibility is it? How can each person make a difference?

Submissions for the American Film Week short documentary film contest are due no later than 29 September 2014, so you must get started soon!

The winning filmmakers will also receive these great cash prizes:

1st Prize: \$3000 USD!

2nd Prize: \$2000 USD!

3rd Prize: \$1000 USD!

For questions or more information, please message the US Embassy Vientiane on Facebook. The final trailer must be submitted (with your name and contact information) to the US Embassy on DVD via mail or hand delivery at the following address by 29 September 2014 at 5:00pm:

U.S. Embassy Vientiane (Attn: Ken Kosakowski)
19 Rue Bartholonie
That Dam, Vientiane, Laos

Illegal Wildlife Trade in Southeast Asia and the Need for Protection

BACKGROUND: Southeast Asia is a big problem spot for the poaching, trafficking, and consumption of protected wildlife. The region's high biodiversity and accessible transport links make it popular to buy and sell protected species. Light penalties and the public's limited awareness about the issue make it worse, while growing affluence is increasing demand for wildlife products.

Trade in endangered species has devastating impacts. In addition to habitat loss, poaching and trafficking to supply demand from the fashion industry, pet dealers, restaurants, and traditional pharmacies is driving many species towards extinction. As these organisms are lost, so are their inputs to critical natural processes and ecosystem resilience, which causes other species to disappear. Many of those involved in the trade, including consumers, are unaware of the terrible impact their actions have on biodiversity and the environment.

SCALE AND REACH OF THE TRADE: Due to the nature of illicit trade, it is hard to obtain exact figures, but some experts estimate the value of the illegal wildlife trade at \$10-20 billion USD annually. While arrests and interceptions are on the rise, they expose only a small fraction of this underground criminal enterprise. The illegal wildlife trade affects all Southeast Asian nations. A significant proportion of wildlife trafficked through Southeast Asia is purchased by wealthy consumers outside the region, in China, Europe and the United States.

DEMAND FOR WILDLIFE: Drivers of the illegal wildlife trade include demand for timber; rare plants; bones, scales and other ingredients for traditional medicines; pets and zoo exhibits; collectors' trophies; decorations and luxury items; as well as wild meat. Sex trade operators in the region have also been implicated in illegal wildlife trade, offering customers wildlife-based aphrodisiacs. In 2007 and 2008, undercover investigators discovered brothels in Vietnam offering tiger and bear products to their clients.

TRADED SPECIES: Almost all wild species are traded. The most heavily traded mammal is the pangolin. Despite dwindling wild populations, big cats and their body parts are still regularly found in trade. Reptiles, birds and illegal timber are also traded in large quantities in Southeast Asia.

THE IMPACTS OF WILDLIFE CRIME:

- **Permanent Biodiversity Loss:** If trends continue, scientists predict that up to 40% of Southeast Asia's animal and plant species could be wiped out this century. At least half those losses would represent global extinctions.
- **Degradation of Natural Ecosystems and Essential Environmental Services:** Poaching to supply wildlife trade disturbs delicate biological balances. Knock-on effects can precipitate the unraveling of living ecosystems that underpin fresh water supply and food production. With scientists predicting severe impacts from a changing climate, reducing other man-induced pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems, such as poaching, is imperative.

- **Human Health at Risk:** Unregulated trade in wild animals can spread and pass on viruses and diseases. SARS and Bird Flu, for example, were transferred by wild animals to humans.
- **Organized Crime Strengthened:** Profits from illegal wildlife trade, which now ranks among the most lucrative types of black market commerce, make organized crime rings more powerful. Links are now being detected between wildlife crime, drug trafficking and human trafficking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (www.cites.org)
- ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (www.asean-wen.org)
- Freeland (www.freeland.org)
- World Wildlife Fund (www.panda.org)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (www.wcs.org)