

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FRIENDS OF THE LA RIVER HOSTS FIRST RIVER FEST
A COMMUNITY FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATING THE RIVER
AND NEW TAKE ON FOLAR'S FALL FUNDRAISER**

Los Angeles, CA (October 4, 2022) - [Friends of the Los Angeles River \(FoLAR\)](#) hosted its [first River Fest](#) on Sunday, September 25, 2022 at Los Angeles State Historic Park. River Fest is a free community film festival celebrating the Los Angeles River, and a new, more equitable approach to FoLAR's annual fall fundraiser.

River Fest welcomed over 550 attendees in its inaugural year and featured over 30 interactive booths from FoLAR and event partners, several raffles, local food trucks, a live DJ, prizes for attendees in zero-waste clothing, FoLAR's 38-foot mobile education center, also known as the "River Rover", a green carpet photo opportunity for all attendees, and a VIP area. The event's land acknowledgment was led by Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation.

River Fest's feature presentation was displayed on a 45-foot screen and featured short environmental films that highlight the LA River's deep connection to art, environmental justice, and community health. FoLAR's first beer in collaboration with Frogtown Brewery – "FoLAR's Sunlitter" – debuted at the event.

River Fest replaced FoLAR's fall gala as a new community-centered, equitable approach to FoLAR's annual fall fundraiser. General admission tickets for the event were free, and featured access to all of the event's interactive booths and films.

"As a local non-profit, putting together a community event as large as River Fest is no small feat. But the enthusiasm that our LA community showed us in this inaugural year, and seeing so many different folks come together to learn about and celebrate the LA River's connection to our collective wellbeing, made it clear that we need an event like River Fest," said FoLAR CEO Candice Dickens-Russell.

At the end of the evening, Senator Anthony J. Portantino [formally announced and presented](#) Dickens-Russell and FoLAR staff with \$150,000 in funding to FoLAR, approved for the 2022-2023 State Budget.

At approximately 8:30pm, a malfunction with the LA State Historic Park sprinkler system led to an early ending to River Fest at 8:45pm, 30 minutes before the scheduled time. The park has issued a statement on the malfunction:

California State Parks would like to extend an apology for the unfortunate and unforeseen incident that occurred at the Friends of the LA River film event on September 25th. Though every effort is always made to ensure these incidents do not occur, a malfunction of the sprinkler timer system caused the water to be turned on. State Park maintenance staff is still investigating the malfunction, as well as alternatives, to prevent any future incidents. California State Parks looks forward to its continued relationship with Friends of the L.A. River.

River Fest 2022 was made possible through major supporters Amazon, REI, M2O, Bank of America, City of Long Beach, Lauren Bon and Metabolic Studio, and a host of additional sponsors and donors.

See River Fest River Fest 2022 Films and Film Contributors below.

River Fest 2022 Films and Film Contributors

Edge Condition

Lauren Bon & Metabolic Studio

Pedal Through

REI Co-op

Concrete River

Pizza Night Productions

Matthew Scott & Cody Whitman

District 15

Patagonia

FoLAR River Fest Video

FoLAR Staff

& Adam Abada

River of Angels

BeAlive Studios Presents

A BackRoads Pictures Film

Anza Trail

Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians Kizh Nation

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

Friends of Griffith Park

Adam Abada

WRD

The Water Replenishment District

FoLAR Impact Video

Isabella Rodriguez

Friends of the Los Angeles River is a 501c3 nonprofit whose mission is to build capacity for communities, students, and future leaders to advocate for nature, climate, and equity on the Los Angeles River. FoLAR is a leading force in educating youth, guiding policy, and connecting communities to the River.

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