

Making Ripples

10 Popular Eco-themed Movies

by Amanda Bancroft

With summer heat approaching, air-conditioned movie theaters can be a nice escape for a few hours. Local theaters like AMC in the Fiesta Square shopping center in Fayetteville are even undergoing a posh renovation with new recliner seats. But the home theater is popular, too, and has its perks (price, for one thing). Whether you're looking for child-friendly cartoons, nature documentaries, or adult dramas, there are new and old movies for all ages that carry an environmental message without beating you over the head with it. Here are ten from a variety of genres that have gained good or excellent ratings. Almost all of these are available for free at the Fayetteville Public Library and many are on Netflix. Organic popcorn would make a good complement to these movies, or you might try healthy snacks like apple slices dipped in cinnamon raisin peanut butter!

BBC's "Planet Earth" and "Planet Earth II" (Nature Documentary)

While technically a television series, this is by far the most stunning series of nature films currently available. They take you almost everywhere on earth, showing the change of seasons and sped-up growth of plants and fungi. It's educational, captivating entertainment.

Studio Ghibli's "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind," "Castle in the Sky," "My Neighbor Totoro," "Princess Mononoke" or "Ponyo" (Anime)

Extremely popular among teenagers but also with younger children and adults, the work of Hayao Miyazaki is unparalleled. Because so many of his films contain gorgeously drawn natural landscapes with inspiring environmental themes, it's impossible to recommend just one.

Pixar's Wall-E (Computer Animated)

Pixar takes viewers to a post-apocalyptic earth devastated by humans, who long since left to live in space until habitable conditions exist. It's both a robot love story and a call to live healthy, sustainable lives while we still can.

"The Buffalo Flows" (Local Documentary) by natives Larry Foley and Dale Carpenter

This Arkansas film explores the importance of our first national river, its ecological and cultural significance, and the people who love it.

"Erin Brockovich" (Drama)

Based on a true story, Julia Roberts plays the role of Erin Brokovich, a file clerk who assisted a lawyer in uncovering evidence of poisoned water in a small California town.

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist building an off-grid cottage for land conservation on Mt. Kessler. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer a solar-hosted online educational center on how to make a difference with everyday choices at: www.RipplesBlog.org.