



Image courtesy of MacGillivray Freeman

Fernbank Museum to Host World Premiere and Exclusive Opening Weekend of Epic Giant Screen Film “AMERICAN AMAZON” Featuring the South’s Wildest Secrets

ATLANTA, Oct. 13, 2026 — Discover a spectacular wilderness hiding in plain sight in “**AMERICAN AMAZON**,” a new film for IMAX and giant screen theaters narrated by Grammy and Academy Award-winning musical artist and storyteller, Jon Batiste. A Louisiana native, Batiste lends his distinctive voice to this celebration of the South’s extraordinary wildlife, honoring its wild places and unparalleled biodiversity.

The film will have its World Premiere at Fernbank Museum during a private sold-out event on Nov. 12 and will begin showing exclusively in Fernbank’s giant screen theater beginning Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, with exhibitions in additional giant screen theaters to follow.

Four years in the making, “**AMERICAN AMAZON**” celebrates one of the most ecologically important--and least understood--regions in North America. Traveling across Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and the Carolinas, audiences will discover untold stories, hidden natural wonders and the rare beauty of one of America’s last secret wildernesses.

The film reveals an ancient and mysterious landscape of towering, two-thousand-year-old cypress trees, labyrinths of flooded forests and winding blackwater rivers teeming with life. Audiences come face-to-face with iconic American “swamp bears,” bellowing alligators, playful manatees and even the elusive Florida panther. Guests will also experience the mass migration of the world’s only social raptor, the swallow-tailed kite.

“The American Amazon is one of the most extraordinary wild places on the planet, yet it remains surprisingly unknown—even to many who live in the South,” said Eric Bendick, director, writer and producer of “**AMERICAN AMAZON**.” “We wanted to reveal this remarkable world in a way that inspires people to see their own backyard

differently and recognize just how much there is still to discover and protect. With its deep roots in conservation and its own remarkable old-growth urban forest, Fernbank is the perfect location to premiere this film.”

“Fernbank has always been about connecting people with the natural world and inspiring a deeper understanding of the incredible biodiversity that surrounds us,” said Jennifer Grant Warner, President and CEO of Fernbank Museum. “We are thrilled to host the world premiere of **“AMERICAN AMAZON,”** a film that so beautifully captures the wildness, wonder and resilience of the South. It’s especially meaningful to share this story here in Georgia, where so many of the landscapes and species featured in the film can be found right in our own backyard.”

Particularly special to Fernbank’s audiences, **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** celebrates hidden local secrets. Giant hellbender salamanders (the largest salamanders in North America) are among the remarkable species featured in Georgia’s own waterways. Additionally, the Suwannee River and Tallulah Gorge showcase the rich biodiversity and dramatic landscapes that make the state an important part of the American Amazon story.

Guiding viewers on the journey, narrator Jon Batiste introduces us to a diverse team of scientists, photographers, athletes and conservationists who venture deeper into the American Amazon to better understand its mysteries. Through their discoveries, audiences witness remarkable stories of survival, adaptation, and ingenuity as wildlife responds to a dynamic landscape shaped by floods, wildfires and hurricanes.

More than a journey into an extraordinary wilderness, **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** is a celebration of an ecosystem that is as fragile as it is resilient. As human impacts increasingly threaten these landscapes, the film invites audiences to reconnect with the wild places close to home and consider how sharing and understanding these natural wonders can help protect them for generations to come.

Fernbank Museum’s commitment to host the World Premiere event and an exclusive run of **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** is in line with its longstanding mission to preserve nature and educate people about the importance of natural spaces. That mission dates back to the museum’s origins and the effort to preserve and protect Fernbank Forest, a 65-acre old-growth urban forest that today provides visitors with a living connection to the natural world that is celebrated in **“AMERICAN AMAZON.”**

The world premiere of **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** will be followed by an opening weekend of special programming featuring the filmmakers and talent featured throughout the film. Filmmakers and guests will join Fernbank After Dark on Friday, Nov. 13, followed by special appearances during Adventures in Science Day on Saturday, Nov. 14. On Sunday, Nov. 15, acclaimed National Geographic photographer and **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** producer, Mac Stone, will present a special lecture; following will be a panel discussion with director Eric Bendick to discuss conservation goals, and the making of the film and companion photobook for giant screen, broadcast and print.

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“AMERICAN AMAZON” is part of Fernbank’s fall film series that highlights the importance and positive outcomes of conservation initiatives. New films include “Guardians of the Wild” (playing daily), “America the Beautiful” (opening Nov. 11) and **“AMERICAN AMAZON”** (opening Nov. 14).

ADVENTURES IN SCIENCE on Nov. 14 is an annual Discovery Day that invites families and guests of all ages to explore what it’s like to be a scientist. Partners provide learning activities, demonstrations, experiments and more to engage audiences in the many ways science is part of our world.

“AMERICAN AMAZON” is produced by Grizzly Creek Films and PBS Nature in association with Common Pictures, WNET Group and MacGillivray Freeman Films. Presenting sponsors are Cox Enterprises and the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

“AMERICAN AMAZON” is presented by Cox Enterprises. Sponsored locally by Delta Air Lines, Novelis, and Union Pacific | Norfolk Southern.

Tickets

Exhibits, films and Discovery Days are included with daytime general admission and with CityPASS. General admission tickets include three floors of exhibits in the natural history museum, choice of one giant screen film, and 75-acres of nature explorations in Fernbank Forest and WildWoods. Fernbank After Dark and some other special after-hours events are available at a separate ticket price and may include access to special exhibits. Fernbank is located at 767 Clifton Road NE in Atlanta, minutes from midtown Atlanta and downtown Decatur.

General admission tickets vary by date and program and include a film in the Giant Screen Theater. Tickets purchased at FernbankMuseum.org are discounted (\$23.95-\$27.95). Members receive free general admission. More information is available at FernbankMuseum.org.

Media Inquiries

Jena Allison | Communications Manager

Jena.Allison@FernbankMuseum.org

About Fernbank Museum

Fernbank is one of the most popular and iconic cultural destinations in Atlanta. Known as Atlanta's Science and Nature Experience, Fernbank invites guests to discover a World of Wow through an expansive natural history museum, 4-story giant screen theater, and 75-acres of nature adventures in WildWoods and Fernbank Forest. One of the oldest not-for-profit conservation organizations in the country, Fernbank was founded in 1939 to preserve Fernbank Forest, the largest urban, old growth, Piedmont forest in the United States. The museum and giant screen theater opened as “a school in the woods for nature studies” on Oct. 5, 1992, and is today known for its giant dinosaurs, hands-on STEAM* programming, immersive experiences, and year-round nature exploration. Visit FernbankMuseum.org and follow @fernbankmuseum on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and TikTok for more information. *Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics.