AN AMAZING GIANT SCREEN LOOK AT SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME

nWave Pictures, in Association with the World Wide Fund for Nature-The Netherlands, Spotlights Three Critical Challenges to Our Planet in a New Giant Screen Film Hosted and Narrated by Respected Television News Icon, Walter Cronkite

Ranging from the steamy rainforests of Borneo to the wilds of the Arctic to the depths of the world's oceans, ***SOS Planet*** uses state-of-the-art, giant screen digital animation to explore three of the planet's most troubled environmental areas. With the immersive effect of giant screen 3-D and stunningly realistic computer-generated animals, this giant screen film plunges audiences into lush environments, blending live action and animation to illustrate some of the greatest dangers facing the Earth today.

Hosted and narrated by venerable newsman Walter Cronkite and produced by nWave Pictures in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature – The Netherlands (WWF), ***SOS Planet*** breaks new ground with dramatic digital effects used in ways never before seen in the giant screen industry.

SOS PLANET will both amaze and inform as the cause and effect of each environmental condition is highlighted and explained through the magic of giant screen computer-generated 3-D imagery. This total cinematic immersive experience offers an entirely new take on areas of environmental concern so often glossed over by traditional media outlets.

Cronkite lends his expertise to the film's premise that the proliferation of media outlets and the subsequent cacophony that has ensued have made it difficult for more complex and vitally important messages to break through more "demographically appealing" information. Citing

the "urgent necessity that we get the message out to the people of the world that our environmental quality is fast sinking and endangering our very existence on this planet," Cronkite was filmed against a green screen and digitally composited into a 3-D television set that floats out from the giant screen to open several segments of the film. ***SOS Planet*** is the first giant screen film Cronkite has narrated since the 1985 release *The Dream Is Alive,* which became one of the top-grossing giant screen films of all time.

SOS Planet is the first large format film to feature character animation created with the latest digital technologies, and the film uses 3-D and computer-generated animation to a greater extent than any other large format film has ever employed. The film's hyper-realistic computer-generated environments graphically depict three different endangered ecosystems, and the digital effects allow audiences to feel as though they are entering the ecosystem and experiencing the action along with the animal characters.

SOS Planet is expected to screen in museums, science centers and commercial venues around the world. The film's educational content will be highlighted and expanded via a specially created teacher's guide. This guide will be offered for use in school curriculums, grades 3 through 10, and will be available through the giant screen theaters exhibiting ***SOS Planet***. The guides include classroom exercises that emphasize the three areas of global conservation covered in the film: global warming, rainforest deforestation and depletion of the oceans.

# # #

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Known in the industry for its lavish effects and vibrant animation, nWave Pictures forays onto new ground with ***SOS Planet***, a film with dazzling digital effects produced in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature – The Netherlands (WWF) and hosted by Walter Cronkite. The film uses digital effects, 3-D and computer-generated character animation in ways never before seen in the large format industry, plunging audiences into the core of some of the most serious environmental crises facing the Earth today. The film draws the audience into three lush environments, with a blend of live action and animation, using computer-animated animals to graphically illustrate the dangers confronting each targeted region.

"I was attracted to this project by the urgent necessity that we get the message out to the people of the world that our environmental quality is fast sinking and endangering our very existence on this planet," says venerable newsman Walter Cronkite. "We've got to do something about that."

The Face of Trust

Cronkite, who narrates and hosts ***SOS Planet***, agreed to lend his credibility to the project because, as he said in an interview about the film, "I hope that we begin to move rapidly to do something about the problem of environmental quality – to curb pollution, curb overpopulation and to curb the exploitation of our wildlife, our forests, and our oceans. We need to ensure a happy future for the planet and ensure that our children, and our children's children, have a decent life on this planet." Filmed against a green screen, Cronkite is digitally composited into a 3-D television set that floats out toward the audience to open several segments of the film. ***SOS Planet*** is the first giant screen film Cronkite has narrated since IMAX's 1985 release *The Dream Is Alive,* a look at the U.S. space shuttle that became one of the top-grossing large format films of all time.

The Attraction Connection

SOS Planet was born out of the WWF – The Netherlands' desire to create an innovative project that would bring the Earth's plight directly to the public in a totally enveloping way. "They approached me a couple of years ago to create a theme park attraction, what we call a

4-D attraction, a 3-D film about ten minutes in length with some physical effects in the theater," explains Ben Stassen writer/director of ***SOS Planet***. "They wanted to do something special, something where they could immerse the audience in an experience and get their environmental message across in a very different way." The result is the PandaVision 4-D attraction at the Efteling Theme Park in The Netherlands, which features completely computer-generated environments illustrating three environmental challenges facing the planet.

SOS Planet is a 3-D, large format extension of PandaVision and puts the attraction and its important message into the context of the Information Age. "For many years, the WWF – The Netherlands had been very successful in getting their message out in the media, but they were having a more difficult time in this day and age with the mushrooming of media outlets and the Internet. You might think more outlets would help, but the information becomes so fragmented that when you have complex issues like the conservation of our environment, the future of our planet, you have to think about new ways to raise public awareness," says Stassen.

SOS Planet follows the construction of the PandaVision attraction and includes the creation of the film, punctuated by additional 4-D effects. "I thought that doing nature conservation issues in a theme park was quite an interesting and innovative approach, and I saw that it had a much more lasting effect on the public," says Stassen. "I've seen very young kids coming out of PandaVision and they *really* get the core message.

"I wasn't interested in doing a behind-the-scenes, making-of-the-attraction film, but I felt that the whole process of communicating important issues of our time to the public-at-large was an interesting subject. So we combined the two topics into this large format, 3-D documentary that became ***SOS Planet***," says Stassen.

The Third Dimension

The film covers three of the most pressing issues in global habitat conservation – the greenhouse effect, marine conservation, and deforestation – and introduces character animation to populate the three computer–generated environments that illustrate the crises. "The 3-D digital characters that we created – polar bears, orangutans, monkeys, a sea turtle, a

sea horse, a snake – interact with the audience," says Charlotte Huggins, producer of the film. "The character interactions with the audience allow the movie-goers to *experience* the film, not just watch it."

"The 3-D is really just an extra punch," Huggins continues. "The film is very strong in 2-D, but the three-dimensional aspect lets the audience get one step closer in feeling totally immersed in the environments depicted on screen."

Strangely enough, the power of the large screen format can work at cross-purposes with 3-D effects, according to Stassen. "People go to a large format film expecting a larger-than-life experience. The third dimension has completely the opposite effect. The third dimension reduces the size of the screen, but it gives the experience an intimacy that I really like. We're trying to transport the audience into the core of the issue, and 3-D enables you to do that like no other format in the world.

Proponents of the 3-D effect claim it eliminates the "window effect" so audiences don't feel as though they are looking at an image within a frame. "They are transported completely within the cinematic space itself and that's really a fantastic tool," says Stassen.

Gigantic Appeal

The filmmakers and WWF - The Netherlands worked together to select topics with the broad audience and scheduling demands of large format theaters in mind. "We decided that we had to focus on issues that were globally known, visually appealing – something that would translate well to the big screen – and be readily understandable," says Stassen. The result is a film designed to appeal on different levels to both adults and children, using the digital effects to deliver a serious message in a playful and entertaining way.

Breaking New Ground

"The most important difference between this and other large format films, is the animal characters that we've created," says Huggins. In fact, 3-D character animation has never been done to this degree in large format before, according to Stassen, "and it's certainly not been done with the new digital technologies.

"This is the fourth large format 3-D film we've made; in fact, one of the greatest challenges in making these films is that there are so few references. There have only been about 20 large format 3-D films ever made, so how do you know what's going to work and what's not going to work? Nearly everything we try is new and that's very challenging in and of itself," he says.

On the Face of It

One of the more interesting challenges was settling on a basic treatment of the character animation. "There was a lot of ambivalence on the scientific end of the WWF – The Netherlands to our suggestion of animating the characters' faces," says Stassen. "I wanted to create hyper-realistic environments and create characters that had very realistic bodies but with more animated faces. Anthropomorphization is a tricky issue because it's a thin line between being corny and having something that works." But Stassen believed that accurately drawn animals in a realistic looking environment would set up an expectation that the animals behave like real animals. "The characters are doing all kinds of things that animals don't do, so you have to find a way to convey the message and still be believable," says Stassen.

Ironically, Stassen was advocating much more labor for his production team, because creating faces is complicated work for animators. "It would be much easier to just copy a realistic photo, but I thought it was necessary to create likable characters and to do that, I thought their faces needed to be more expressive," Stassen explains. The 35-member nWave animation team spent nearly 12 months to create the 40-minute film, which is a fairly short period of time for the amount and degree of animation in ***SOS Planet***.

"The technical side of creating this film was very burdensome," admits Stassen. "The resolution issues and the 3-D issues are very different for animators, so it's very taxing on them. If we were working with animators who had never done large format 3-D, we would need twice the time and probably four times the number of animators to achieve the same results. I've had this team for about ten years, and experience is absolutely key."

Entertaining with a Purpose

"nWave traditionally has made more entertaining movies for the commercial market. ***SOS Planet*** is an entertaining movie with a serious topic," says Huggins. "The message is presented in an engaging way that we hope children and their parents, adults and schoolteachers will enjoy. But underneath the fun is an important message. And the message is that we need to be respectful of our planet and take responsibility for it." The film is expected to run in museums and science centers, as well as commercial venues, and be used in school curriculums. The educational component includes a teacher's guide for grades 3 through 10, which will be available through the theaters exhibiting ***SOS Planet***. The guides include classroom exercises that emphasize the three areas of global conservation covered in the film: global warming, rain forest deforestation and depletion of the oceans.

"I'm hoping that the audiences leaving the IMAX theaters will wish to enlist with the environmental organizations that are working night and day to save our planet from extinction," says Cronkite. "I'm hoping that people will at least understand and support those organizations and those who are working for improvement of the environment and its protection for the future."

The nWave Difference

Using their entertainment expertise in a serious film is an exciting new adventure say the ***SOS Planet*** filmmakers. "We've always been seen in the large format industry as kind of rebels, because our films don't fit the traditional mode," Stassen says. "For me it was really fun to discover that I could also enjoy doing a film that answers more to the mission statement of most large format theaters."

But taking the more traditional approach has its own filmmaking challenges as well. "Doing a movie where the message is so important puts a burden on the overall production," concedes Huggins. "Because we have to communicate this well. We have a responsibility to get the information correct, the science has to be correct, the environments we create have to be correct."

"Our goal is that the audience will come away from this movie wanting to learn more about the three habitats and the three environmental crises. Instead of hearing about these problems as something that happens somewhere else, we hope audiences go away with the idea that there is something they can do as individuals to reverse the tide. It's hard for people to understand that something that happens in the Borneo rain forest might effect them personally, but it does. All these things are connected and we're all connected. And that's what ***SOS Planet*** is about."

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FILM SUMMARIES

Highlight Synopsis

Hosted and narrated by Walter Cronkite, ***SOS Planet*** uses state-of-the-art, giant screen 3-D and digital animation to explore three of the planet's most troubled environmental areas. With the immersive effect of giant screen 3-D and stunningly realistic computer-generated animals, this giant screen film plunges audiences into lush environments, blending live action and animation to illustrate some of the greatest dangers facing the Earth today: global warming, rainforest deforestation and depletion of the oceans. Produced by nWave Pictures in association with the World Wide Fund for Nature – The Netherlands (WWF), ***SOS Planet*** breaks new ground with dramatic digital effects used in ways never before seen on the giant screen.

Short Synopsis

Hosted and narrated by Walter Cronkite ***SOS Planet*** explores global warming, marine depletion and deforestation using state-of-the-art, giant screen 3-D and digital animation.

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Q&A WITH WRITER/DIRECTOR BEN STASSEN AND PRODUCER CHARLOTTE HUGGINS

How did the World Wildlife Fund – The Netherlands happen to connect with nWave Productions, which is more known for entertainment productions than for documentary filmmaking?

BS: When WWF first contacted me, I was quite surprised because I'm not exactly known as a wildlife filmmaker. I've done a lot of 3-D films, but mostly commercially oriented films and mostly digitally created computer-animated films, so when they first got in touch with us, I said, "Maybe you've mistaken me for somebody else." And they said, "No, no, we really want to think outside the box and find a new way to get the message across." They didn't want to do a live action wildlife film. They wanted to do a computer-animated film. And that was the beginning of this whole adventure.

Would you expect young children to attend* SOS Planet*? What's the target audience?

BS: I would absolutely expect young children to attend our film. Although 99 percent of the giant screen films are targeted to 8-year-olds, I wanted to do something different. I wanted to make a film for parents that children would have fun watching, instead of a film that children like and adults just sit through. Some of what Walter Cronkite says in ***SOS Planet*** is much more complex than the content in the average large format film, and a lot of that will go over the heads of elementary school kids. But the visuals are compelling enough to keep the kids engaged. Little kids may not understand all the content, but they will get a kick out of effects like the sunrise, and they will understand a lot by the visuals – they will see that something could be wrong with our climate. I think it's a good balance between what will appeal to both the kids and the adults.

***Walter Cronkite lends a tremendous aura of credibility to your film. How did he become involved with* SOS Planet**?

CH: Our film really has two plots – the main plot is about habitat conservation, but the subplot is why the public at large isn't caring about what's going on in the environment and why they aren't insisting that something be done about such devastating global atrocities like deforestation and overfishing. Our contention is that the public doesn't really know what's going on because the media only gives snippets of information – there's so little in-depth reporting. As we were completing the visuals for the film and contemplating the issue of our on-screen narration, I heard Mr. Cronkite on *Larry King Live* discussing the role of the media in the reporting of the events of September 11 and other globally important events. I called Ben and he had just seen the same show on CNN. We both agreed that, if we could get him, he would be the perfect spokesman for our film.

BS: What struck me was that his message was exactly the same as the one in our film, even though the topic is so different. He was talking about the war in Afghanistan and was critical of the administration for not giving the public access to information and of the media for not scratching under the surface of the official briefings. He mentioned how technology has provided new ways to get information – like the Internet, webcams, satellite communications, etc. – and yet even though it's easier than ever before to access information, it's still hard for a cohesive message to break through. And that's exactly what the WWF - The Netherlands was facing when they started this whole project.

How scientifically accurate is* SOS Planet*?

BS: WWF experts and consultants carefully went through each segment of the script, and we changed things at their suggestion so the environments and animals would be as realistic as possible. For instance, we had scripted a green python in the Borneo rain forest sequence, but the WWF said that green pythons aren't found there, so we changed it to a brown snake that lives in that habitat. I had also wanted to show a polar bear family with two parents, but the scientists pointed out that the male polar bears never live with the mother bear and her cubs,

so we changed that, too. Everything we included in the underwater sequence is consistent with what you might find in a Caribbean coral reef.

CH: We also sent the script to two science museums, and they both signed off on the scientific content. The biggest issue for the scientific community was the anthropomorphization of the character animation. There was a huge debate among the WWF scientists over that because it's not what they would consider straight science. But they eventually understood that giving us some creative license would bring the kids into the environments and help them care about what happens. They agreed to the animation as long we were not creating something that could never really happen within those environments. And no child over the age of seven will believe these animals are real; children recognize animation.

Why did you decide to use 3-D in* SOS Planet*?

BS: Getting audiences to keep coming to the giant screen theaters is about creating new experiences. And using the third dimension gives audiences an experience they can't get anywhere else. TV sets at home are getting better and bigger and even the multiplexes are starting to get stadium seating with huge screens that are almost as big as IMAX screens. But the third dimension, which you can only do in giant screen, 3-D equipped theaters, brings an incredible edge to the experience. ***SOS Planet*** is a serious film that will appeal to mature audiences, but we also want to appeal to little kids, and the 3-D allows me to bridge the gap between making a film with a serious message and one that is playful and fun and entertaining.

Not all giant screen theaters have 3-D capability. How will* SOS Planet *work in non-3-D-equipped venues?

BS: ***SOS Planet*** will play very well on domed theaters, even without the 3-D effect. The films that look best on domed theaters are films that are saturated with color, like underwater and space films. The reason is the way the domes bounce light. The physical curves of the dome bounce light in every direction, instead of straight back at the projector, the way it works on

flat screens. The bounced light washes the image out on the screen, like when you're watching a film in daylight. So the visually dark films – not dark in content, but literally dark – tend to work best for domed screens. ***SOS Planet*** is both an underwater AND a space film, so it will look great in these venues, too.

CH: And most of the theaters that aren't equipped with 3-D are domes. Dome theaters are very interesting on their own because you're basically sitting in a planetarium-type setting with the movie playing around you. As an immersive type of experience, it's very similar to that of 3-D.

Also, the way you frame a film for 3-D is exactly the same as the way you frame it for a domed theater. In 3-D and for domed theaters, you try to keep the action in the middle of the screen without breaking frame.—In 3-D you do that so that the 3-D effect isn't broken, and in the dome because the edges get distorted. So, in other words, ***SOS Planet*** will translate beautifully from flat screen 3-D to 2-D domed theaters.

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Q&A WITH ANIMATORS JOS CLAESEN AND ANTHONY HUERTA

How did you create the character animation in* SOS Planet*?

AH: First I create all the characters in clay, giving the models a different expression on each side of their faces to give a better idea of what they will look like. Then we transfer those images to the computer and give them life. The whole process is very long. Each animator had one character, their "baby," to bring alive. We all had our favorites, of course. I liked the sea horse and turtle because I thought they had such expressive faces and were really fun.

How did the need for scientific accuracy affect your work?

JC: It's very different from creating fiction. With fiction there are a lot of things that can be discussed that people have different opinions about, but with a factual film it's different. Although even with scientific facts, there can be different theories. It's not always easy to go into details on ecological problems because they are complicated and there are often different theories and data. There were things we had to leave out because we couldn't resolve the contradictions in the time that we had.

How did you shoot the floating TV sequences with Walter Cronkite?

JC: We shot him with a green screen so we could replace the background later. We shot a lot of footage of him and then went looking for newsreel and television news footage to illustrate what he was saying. We knew what he was going to say, of course, but we tried to match images with the words he accented during the filming. We wanted to create a background that was good enough to fit Mr. Cronkite and what he had to say. Then we placed his image with the background we created into a 3-D environment so he would come off the giant screen toward the audience.

What was your biggest challenge in* SOS Planet*?

JC: It was hard to find the material because even though ***SOS Planet*** is not fiction, we still had to tell a story and we had to be accurate. But we were covering something that is not history, and while of course even history can be disputed, we were covering the future, so there can be a lot of different opinions about what might happen in the future. We also wanted to have a film that was accurate today, but would also be accurate five or ten years from now too.

How is* SOS Planet *different than other films nWave Pictures has created?

JC: It's not that different in that it's entertaining. But it's different in that the others were pure fun, but ***SOS Planet*** is about a cause, the importance of taking care of our planet. We always hope that people will like our films, but this time we not only hope that they like it, but we hope that they will think about it and change their habits too.

Why do you have a mirror above your workstation?

AH: (Laughing) It's not to check my hair! I use the mirror when I am creating expressions for the characters – to see which part of the face is moving when I'm making an expression and then adapt it for the character. People who don't know what we're doing might think we're completely crazy because we are always making faces in the mirror!

# # #

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTS INCLUDED IN FILM

The Greenhouse Effect

- Without some "greenhouse effect," the Earth would be a frigid ball, not unlike Mars, with average temperatures staying well below zero at all times. But too much greenhouse effect could turn Earth into another Venus with its thick atmosphere of carbon dioxide and average surface temperatures of more than 500 degrees Celsius.

- As the sun's energy strikes the Earth, part of it is reflected back into space. The rest is absorbed by the Earth's surface, generating heat in the form of infrared energy.

- Water vapor, carbon dioxide and other gases in the atmosphere collect much of the outgoing infrared energy, acting like a warm blanket around the planet, which provides a stable climate for life on Earth. Without the Earth's atmosphere, most of this heat energy would be lost, resulting in a new Ice Age. The greenhouse effect protects the Earth from this climatic catastrophe.

- The excessive discharge of carbon dioxide from automobile exhaust and other sources has led to an increase in the amount of heat energy trapped in the atmosphere, the so-called "enhanced greenhouse effect."

- The amount of carbon dioxide in the air has grown 30 percent in the last century.

Overfishing and the Oceans

- The only major events affecting the oceans that draw full media coverage are offshore oil spills or chemical disasters in the waterways that feed the seas. While the ecological impact of oil spills and chemical disasters is severe and newsworthy, these events are far less threatening to life in the oceans than the daily occurrence of overfishing.

- Technological advances such as sonar, radar, satellite-assisted fish-finding and huge factory ships with nets large enough to cover a football field have changed the fundamentals of fishing and resulted in dwindling fish populations worldwide.

- Atlantic salmon, Newfoundland and New England cod, halibut, haddock and flounder have been driven to commercial extinction. Their numbers are so low that it is no longer profitable to fish for these species in large parts of their range. Migratory giants such as tunas, swordfish, marlin and sharks are facing a similar fate.

- The adult population of Atlantic giant blue fin tuna off the U.S. East Coast has fallen more than 85 percent since the 1970s, but because they are worth tens of thousands of dollars apiece as sushi in Asia, catch quotas have recently been increased.

- Breeding populations of Atlantic swordfish are only 20 percent of what they were 15 years ago, and today 90 percent of swordfish are caught before they reach breeding age.

- In the twentieth century, ocean fish catches have increased 25-fold**.**

Deforestation

- There are no rainforests in any of the top ten most industrialized countries of the world.

- The clearing of Earth's forest has been happening for many centuries. This process, known as deforestation, involves the cutting down and burning of trees on such a massive scale that whole ecosystems are left in ruin.

- If the current rate of deforestation continues, the world's rain forests will vanish within 50 years, causing unknown effects on the Earth's climate and eliminating the majority of plant and animal species on the planet.

# # #

Animal Species Profiled in Film

Sea Turtle

The warm-water marine turtle is a large reptile with limbs shaped like paddles. Sea turtles are cold-blooded animals that control their body temperature by moving into or out of warm or cool places. Sea turtles are usually found in tropical and subtropical seas. Unlike warm-blooded animals, such as mammals, turtles do not generate heat in their bodies from digesting food. Six of the seven species are listed by the World Wildlife Fund as endangered or critically endangered.

Scientific classification**:** Turtles make up the order *Testudines* in the class *Reptilia*. Hidden-necked turtles make up the suborder *Cryptodira*, and side-necked turtles comprise the suborder *Pleurodira*.

Orangutan

The large, tailless, reddish-brown ape has coarse, shaggy hair and long, powerful arms. Orangutans are found only in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra. The orangutan spends most of its time in trees, using its long arms and hook-shaped hands and feet for grasping branches and vines. It seldom ventures to the ground, but when it does, it walks on all fours. Orangutan populations have declined more than 90 percent in the past century, and the apes are officially listed as endangered.

Scientific classification**:** The orangutan belongs to the family *Pongidae*. It is classified as *Pongo pygmaeus*.

Polar Bear

The white bear is the largest meat-eating land animal in the world and lives in the Arctic on coasts and ice floes. The only marine bear, it is longer than other bears and streamlined for aquatic life. Long hair between its pads protects the bear's feet from the cold and provides

traction on the ice. Stiff hairs on the forelegs, and very broad front feet, help the bear swim. It has wide front feet for swimming and will sometimes cover long distances through icy cold waters. The species is categorized as vulnerable.

Scientific classification**:** The polar bear belongs to the family *Ursidae* in the order *Carnivora*. It is classified as *Ursus maritimus*.

Gibbon

The gibbon is a small, tree-dwelling ape of Southeast Asia with a slender body and long arms that allow it to swing rapidly and agilely from branch to branch. The primate is one of the few mammals that can support its weight by hanging from its arms alone. Primates live in a wide range of habitats but are restricted by their need for warmth.

Most primates live in tropical jungles or dry forests, but some live in dry grasslands, and others have settled in cold, mountainous regions of China and Japan. More than 110 species of primates — nearly half of the world's total — are currently under threat of extinction. This makes the primates among the most vulnerable animals on earth. Five of the nine species of gibbons are listed as endangered.

Scientific classification**:** The gibbons make up the family *Hylobatidae* and the great apes make up the family *Hominidae*.

Snake

The snake is a legless reptile with a long, flexible body covered with overlapping scales. Snakes have thin, forked tongues, no external ears, and eyes that are always open, protected by immobile, transparent scales. There are more than 500 species of snakes belonging to more than 10 families. Snakes are highly versatile and occupy habitats ranging from underground burrows to the tops of trees to ocean depths as great as nearly 500 feet (150 m). They are found on every continent except Antarctica, and although they are most abundant in

tropical areas, many survive in regions marked by extreme cold. The only places without snakes are parts of the polar regions and isolated islands, such as Ireland and New Zealand.

Scientific classification**:** Snakes make up the suborder *Serpentes* in the lizard and snake order, *Squamata*, in the class *Reptilia*.

Seahorse

A seahorse, whose head resembles that of a horse, is any of a number of small fishes in the same family as the pipefish. It has long, tubular jaws much like a snout. The body is compressed, with an elongated tail, and its external covering is a series of large, rectangular bony plates, with sets of spines and projections along the lines of juncture. About 30 species are found in various warm and temperate seas. All keep near the shore, often developing in brackish water.

Scientific classification**:** Sea horses make up the genus *Hippocampus* in the family Syngnathidae. The common sea horse is classified as *Hippocampus hudsonius*.

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Sources: http://www.wwf.org/; Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2002

LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION ON TOPICS COVERED IN FILM

The World Wildlife Fund
http://www.wwf.org

The National Geographic Society
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/

The Nature Conservancy
http://nature.org/

The Sierra Club
http://www.sierraclub.org/

Earth 911
www.earth911.org

UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
http://www.unep-wcmc.org/

Wildlife Conservation Society
http://www.wcs.org

Marine Conservation:

The Cousteau Society
www.cousteausociety.org

Oceana
www.oceana.org

UN Atlas of the Oceans
www.oceanatlas.org

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
http://www.msc.org

Alaskan Department of Fish and Game
http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/FISH.GAME/adfghome.htm

Rainforest Preservation:

World Rainforest Information Portal
www.rainforestweb.org

The Rainforest Action Network
www.ran.org

The International Network of Forests and Communities (INFC)
http://www.forestsandcommunities.org/

World Resources Institute
http://www.wri.org/forests/index.html

Global Warming:

The Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
ngo.grida.no/caff

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)
www.amap.no

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 3-D AND HOW IT WORKS

The latest film from nWave Pictures, ***SOS Planet*** features eye-popping 3-D and computer-generated character animation used in ways never before seen in a giant screen film. Here's how the technology works:

In 1838, Charles Wheatstone invented the world's first stereoscopic viewer based on Renaissance theories of perspective. Constructed of an assortment of angled mirrors, his invention contained two separate drawings — one for the left eye and one for the right. When both images were observed at the same time, Wheatstone's viewing device produced a stereo image.

Wheatstone's device encouraged the beginning of a new era in motion and still photography. The fact that the left eye and right eye see objects from different angles is the basis for 3-D photography. Looking at an object through one eye and then the other, the image appears to slightly change position. However, with both eyes open, the two images that each eye observes separately are fused together as one by the brain. It is the fusion of these two images that creates normal binocular sight and allows the brain to understand depth and distance. To replicate this process on film, two camera lenses are used in place of two eyes.

Filmmakers place the two lenses of a 3-D camera at about the same distance apart as the distance between two human eyes. This space is referred to as the interocular distance, or interaxial distance, and is typically set at about 2-1/2 inches.

To project a 3-D film, two individual images representing the perspective of the left and right eye are simultaneously projected on screen. Without special glasses during the presentation, it looks like seeing double. To correct the problem of seeing double, each lens of the 3-D glasses has a special filter that blocks out the opposing image, allowing each eye to see only one image. The brain perceives the fusion of the two separate images as one three-dimensional image.

There are several ways to project the dual images necessary to exhibit a 3-D film; however, not all processes require two separate projectors. The anaglyphic film format simultaneously projects two different, offset images from one single strip of film. One image is coated with a green (or blue) color, the other image is coated red. Spectators are given glasses that sport one green (or blue) lens and one red lens. The green lens of the glasses cancels out the red image on screen, while the red lens of the glasses cancels out the green (or blue) image on the screen. The brain processes each separated image as one 3-D "black and white" image.

To see 3-D in color, the images for the left and right eye must be kept separate. Before the advent of today's large format theaters, which use two separate synchronized projectors, previous methods placed two 35mm frames in various configurations, either over and under each other or side by side.

Contemporary 3-D films have begun to use computer-generated imagery to maximize the 3-D illusion. Use of computer created images allows filmmakers total control over convergence and focus, the two most problematic aspects of live action 3-D production. By creating the environment in the computer, the point of convergence can be precisely set by the filmmaker. Furthermore, the entire frame can be kept in focus, something nearly impossible to do when shooting by conventional means. This means that when the film is projected onto the screen, the visual information is absorbed much like it is in the real world, maximizing the illusion.

# # #

KEY PLAYER BIOGRAPHIES

Walter Cronkite (Host & Narrator)

Walter Cronkite has covered virtually every news event during his more than 60 years in journalism – the last 50 affiliated with CBS News. He became a special correspondent for CBS News when he stepped down on March 6, 1981 after 19 years as anchorman and managing editor of the CBS *Evening News*. Affectionately nicknamed "Old Iron Pants" for his unflappability under pressure, Mr. Cronkite's accomplishments – both on-air and off – have won him acclaim and trust from journalism colleagues and the American public alike.

In an interview about ***SOS Planet***, Mr. Cronkite said "I have to hope as anybody who understands the problem of environmental quality that we begin to move rapidly to do something about it to curb pollution, to curb overpopulation, to curb the exploitation of our wildlife, our forests, our oceans so that we can assure a happy future for our planet, and assure that our children and our children's children will have a decent life on this planet."

Born in St. Joseph, Missouri on November 4, 1916, Mr. Cronkite began his career in journalism as a campus correspondent at The Houston Post during high school and his freshman year at college. He also worked as a sports announcer for a local radio station in Oklahoma City and joined the United Press in 1937, where he remained for eleven years.

It was as a United Press correspondent that Mr. Cronkite covered World War II – landing with the invading Allied troops in North Africa, covering the battle of the North Atlantic in 1942, taking part in the Normandy beachhead assaults in 1944 and participating as one of the first newsmen in B-17 raids over Germany. After reporting the German surrender, Mr. Cronkite established United Press bureaus in Europe, was named United Press bureau chief in Brussels and covered the Nuremberg trials of Goering, Hess and other top Nazis. From 1946 to 1948 he was chief correspondent for United Press in Moscow.

In July 1950, Mr. Cronkite joined CBS News in Washington as a correspondent and was anchorman for their political convention and election coverage from 1952 to 1980. He

assumed his duties on the CBS *Evening News* on April 16, 1962, which began as a fifteen-minute broadcast. On September 2, 1963, it debuted as network television's first half-hour, weeknight news broadcast with Mr. Cronkite's headline-making interview with President John F. Kennedy.

Following his departure in March 1981 from the CBS *Evening News*, Mr. Cronkite hosted several acclaimed CBS documentary programs, including the Emmy-winning *Children of Apartheid* and the CBS News science magazine series *Walter Cronkite's Universe*. In 1985, Mr. Cronkite was inducted into the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame.

Mr. Cronkite was the only journalist to be voted among the top ten "most influential decision-makers in America" in surveys conducted by U.S. News and World Report and also was named the "most influential person" in broadcasting. In a nationwide viewer opinion survey conducted as recently as 1995, more than a decade after leaving the CBS anchor desk, he again was voted "Most Trusted Man in Television News."

As an avid sailor of his then 48-foot yacht, "Wyntje", Mr. Cronkite recorded his experiences sailing waterways from the Chesapeake Bay to Key West in his book *South by Southeast* (Oxmoor House, 1983), with paintings by artist, Ray Ellis, accompanying his text. Other collaborations with Mr. Ellis resulted in *North by Northeast* (Oxmoor House, 1986), which covered his trips sailing the northeast coastal waterways, and in *Westwind* (Oxmoor House, 1990) he recounted his sailing tour of America's West Coast. His most recent sailing book, *Around America*, was published in August 2001 (W.W. Norton). Mr. Cronkite's first book, *Eye on the World* (Cowles, 1971) is an edited compendium of CBS News' reporting on the major trends and stories of 1970, for which he provided analysis and commentary.

In addition to his ongoing assignments as a special correspondent for CBS, Mr. Cronkite maintains a demanding, international lecture and public appearance schedule and also hosts many public affairs and cultural programs. In 1993 he co-founded The Cronkite Ward Company, which has produced more than 60 award-winning documentary hours for The Discovery Channel, PBS and other networks.

In 1996, Mr. Cronkite's production company, in collaboration with CBS and The Discovery Channel, produced his memoirs entitled *Cronkite Remembers*. The two-hour CBS special aired in May of that year, and the eight-hour series premiered later on The Discovery Channel. Also in 1996, Mr. Cronkite completed his autobiography, *A Reporter's Life*, published by Knopf.

Ben Stassen (Writer/Director)

A graduate of USC's School of Cinema and Television, Ben Stassen began his career in the film industry by producing *My Uncle's Legacy*, a film that earned him a Golden Globe nomination for Best Foreign Language Film in 1990.

It was during the making of his second feature film that the Belgian native was introduced to the Brussels-based company, Little Big One. A high-end computer graphics company, Little Big One enlisted Stassen's talent as a filmmaker to help get their work acknowledged by the international film community. Stassen welcomed the challenge and suggested that the company use CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) technology to make a simulator ride film as a way to showcase their work in high-end venues around the world. He met with Showscan Entertainment and got them interested in tackling the challenge of producing *Devil's Mine Ride*, one of the first high-resolution computer graphics films in the large screen format. *Devil's Mine Ride* achieved huge success and set the precedent for many other ride films to come.

Stassen went on to co-found nWave Pictures with D&D Media Group, the largest television production company in Belgium. As a content producer, D&D Media Group welcomed the idea of setting up nWave Pictures not as a service company doing production for third parties, but as a fully integrated digital studio developing, financing, producing and distributing products for the location based entertainment market. The plan was a solid one—in less than five years Stassen produced 17 ride films and has built the largest independent library of motion simulation films available in all formats.

In 1996, nWave had the privilege of producing three CGI sequences for *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*, a WGBH/Nova giant screen production directed by Ben Burtt. The success of that venture inspired Stassen to move nWave into the giant screen industry head first and undertake their own in-house production. What emerged was the company's first feature-length giant screen film and Stassen's first directorial effort, *Thrill Ride: The Science of Fun*, co-financed with and distributed by Sony Pictures Classics. The success of Thrill Ride fostered further giant screen efforts, which include *3-D Mania: Encounter in the Third Dimension*, *Alien Adventure*, and *Haunted Castle*—all directed by Stassen.

Charlotte Huggins (Producer)

Charlotte Huggins experienced many facets of the entertainment industry before realizing her passion for special venue production. As a first time writer/producer she made *Interview 15*. A docudrama made with one roll of film, *Interview 15* was honored by several film festivals, including the New York and Berlin Film Festival, as the best Educational Film of the Year. Huggins sharpened her marketing skills in order to raise funds to do three more docudramas before taking a job as head of public relations with Stephen J. Cannell Productions.

At Cannell, Huggins got a job in story development with television legend Roy Huggins – who later became her father-in-law – and went on to write for the hit show *Hunter*. She was soon offered a position at Boss Film Studios where she produced several Clio Award-winning Magnavox television campaigns.

However, Huggins really found her niche when Boss won the contract for the World Expo 93's *Journey to Technopia*, which was received with rave reviews and proved to be a breakthrough in ride film technology. Huggins subsequently went to work on a number of highly successful large format films including serving as visual effects producer for both Disney's *Honey I Shrunk the Audience* and Sony Pictures Classics *Wings of Courage,* which starred Val Kilmer. She was also visual effects producer for LG Group's *Ahead of Time* and executive producer for the King Kong sequence in WGBH/Nova's *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*. Currently, Huggins serves as president of nWave Studios, as well as head of

production and operation of the Los Angeles office, and has served as producer of all of nWave's giant screen productions, including *Thrill Ride*, *3-D Mania: Encounter in the Third Dimension* and *Haunted Castle*.

Married to an environmental biologist, Huggins has a personal affinity for the subjects profiled in ***SOS Planet***.

###

THE NETHERLANDS

Taking Action for a Living Planet

The World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity; ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable; and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Since it was founded in 1961, WWF has become one of the world's largest and most effective independent organizations dedicated to the conservation of nature. It has reached this status through a constant record of conservation achievements.
WWF now works in around 100 countries, supported by nearly five million people worldwide. Its initials and famous Panda logo have become a powerful rallying point for everyone who cares about the future of the planet and wants to help shape it in a positive way.

Forty years ago, WWF's work consisted mainly of protecting animals and plants threatened with extinction. Not just because they are beautiful and rare, but because they are part of a complex chain in which the disappearance of even a single species can have far-reaching consequences. Since then, the scope of the work has broadened. Today, the organization also tackles the many forms of pollution that are harming the soil, atmosphere, freshwater and oceans, which ultimately sustain life. It also looks for new and sustainable ways of using the planet's natural resources. WWF is taking action to protect the environment for people and for nature.

###

A multinational company dedicated to special venue production and distribution, nWave Studios is known for utilizing *innovative digital technologies* to *maximize intellectual properties* throughout *multiple media platforms* including:

- Giant Screen (Imax)
- 2-D & 3-D
- All Film Formats and Electronic Media
- Ride Films
- Attraction Films
- DVD

Founded in 1994 by Ben Stassen and Brussels-based D&D Media Group, nWave Pictures quickly established itself as the world's leading producer and distributor of ride films for the motion simulator market. In fact, the company's current library of titles makes up 60-70% of all ride simulation films being shown worldwide.

The quick maturity of the company afforded nWave the production tools necessary to expand into new areas. So in 1996, with the addition of award-winning special venue producer Charlotte Huggins, nWave Pictures branched out to giant screen film production. One year later, the company released its first film for the giant screen, *Thrill Ride: The Science of Fun*. Upon its release, *Thrill Ride* quickly gained momentum with audiences and was consistently ranked as one of the top 50 films at the box office for over 70 consecutive weeks (as ranked by *Daily Variety*). The film remains in distribution through Sony Pictures Classics

The success of *Thrill Ride* led nWave to new territory yet again, this time to the rapidly growing 3-D sector of the giant screen market. "Audiences at giant screen 3-D theaters around the world are clamoring for 3-D films," notes Charlotte Huggins. "There are scores of giant screen 3-D theaters in the world, but only a handful of 3-D films in distribution."

With a combination of eye-popping computer-generated imagery and spectacular live action, nWave's second giant screen film, *3-D Mania: Encounter in the Third Dimension,* took audiences through the history of 3-D cinema, from its origins to present-day applications. The film debuted in 1998 to eager audiences and continues to wow audiences worldwide as the first giant screen film to feature live action characters within a totally digital environment.

To complement its rapid production growth and further establish itself in the expanding giant screen market, nWave launched its own film distribution company: nWave Pictures Distribution. Headed by former Sony Pictures Classics V.P. Mark Katz, the new division began with the distribution of *3-D Mania* and continued its growth by distributing nWave's third giant screen film, *Alien Adventure* (another 3-D release). The company has since distributed the BBC/Discovery Pictures production *The Human Body*, H5B5's *OceanMen: Extreme Dive*, as well as nWave's fourth release *Haunted Castle (3-D)*.

With visionary style and confidence, nWave Pictures continues to set new standards by creating a special brand of entertainment for the digital revolution and beyond.

- Total Box Office Gross of nWave-produced Giant Screen films: over $70 million in 4 years
- Total number of people who have seen an nWave Giant Screen film: Approximately 15 million people in more than 25 countries in 4 years
- *Thrill Ride* was on the Variety Box Office chart of weekly top grossing films for a record 71 weeks!
- Number of theaters in the world who have shown our films: of the 325 giant screen theaters in the world (IMAX, Iwerks, etc.) more than 275 have played our films. (85%)
- Currently the largest distributor of active 3-D titles
- Our innovative print and advertising strategy has helped revolutionize the giant screen distribution model. By investing hundreds of thousands of dollars, nWave provides prints to theaters creating a broader release potential allowing for a more traditional day-and-date feature film-style launch.

Visit nWave on the web at www.nwave.com.

MOVIDA-TRIX is an award-winning 3-D animation and special effects company specializing in the design and production of digital imagery. Founded in 1993 by animator Anthony Huerta, producer Caroline Van Iseghem, and the D&D Media Group, the company first established itself as the premier animation studio for the creation of ride films for the motion simulator market. The company has since quickly grown to become a key player in the giant screen film industry while continuing to create spectacular imagery for feature films, world expositions, television and advertising.

Based in Brussels, Belgium, Movida-Trix occupies over 700 square meters and houses 25 animators, artists, technical specialists, production managers and producers. Thanks to a customized networked environment, based on a combination of Silicon Graphics, Windows NT and MAC platforms running a variety of software (Maya, Lightwave, Illusion, Softimage, Composer, Digital Fusion, Shake, Flame/Inferno, Matador, Photoshop and Illustrator), the company has been creating high-end computer graphics for extremely satisfied customers worldwide since 1993.

Rides :

Over the last ten years, ride simulation films have become the main attraction at theme parks and other large public venues. In conjunction with co-producer nWave Pictures, Movida-Trix has created an array of rides that continue to propel audiences through time, across galaxies, into imaginary worlds and beyond with popular titles such as *Glacier Run*, *Volcano Mine Ride*, *RGB Adventure*, *Kid Coaster*, and many, many more!

Production :

From traditional 35mm film effects, logo animations and promos to 70mm 2-D and 3-D films, the company aims to entertain and impress audiences. In fact, Movida-Trix ranks as one of the only companies in the world capable of creating high-end computer animation for the giant screen film industry. The company's work has been featured in such giant screen films as

Special Effects: Anything Can Happen, *Amazon*, *Mysteries of Egypt*, *Thrill Ride: The Science of Fun*, *3-D Mania: Encounter in the Third Dimension*, and *Alien Adventure, Haunted Castle,* and *The Human Body*.

Hot spots :

3-D animation and special effects are not just for movies and rides. The company lends its magic to TV and advertising campaigns as well. These short-term projects keep the animators up-to-date with the latest software and trends, as well as keeping them on their toes!

Visit Movida on the web at www.movida3d.com.

# # #

PRODUCTION CREDITS

nWave Pictures
in association with WWF – The Netherlands
presents

Executive Produced and Directed by
Ben Stassen

Produced by
Charlotte Huggins & Caroline Van Iseghem

Written by
Ben Stassen

Narration co-written by
Kurt Frey

Hosted and Narrated by
Walter Cronkite

Animation by Movida-Trix

Sound Design & Additional Music	Pierre Lebecque
	Vincent De Bast
	Yves Renard
Sound Mix	Philippe Baudhuin
Film Recording	Ken Semer
Post Production Supervision	Rick Gordon

SOS PLANET CGI ANIMATION

Senior Animator	Jos Claesen
Animators	Bruno Dekeijser
	Roland Franck
	Anthony Huerta
	Frédéric Robert
	Denis Tassenoy
	Yvan Verhoeven
	Alexandre Gilmart

"PANDADROOM"

PRESHOW	Sandrine Auvertin
	Kris De Boeck
	Jérémie Degruson
	Virginie Dellisse
	Eric Paquet
	Philippe Tailliez
ARCTIC SEQUENCE	Christophe Baliko
	Jacques Defontaine
	Jean-Philippe Francis
	David Molenberghs
	Peter Segers
	Yvan Verhoeven
OCEAN SEQUENCE	Olivier De Cafmeyer
	Bruno Dekeijser
	Roland Franck
	Anthony Huerta
	Eric Paquet
	Frédéric Robert
JUNGLE SEQUENCE	Dimitri Dassonneville
	Frédéric Décamps
	Kris De Boeck
	Jérémie Degruson
	Phillippe Tailliez
	Denis Tassenoy
	Yvan Verhoeven
Post Production	Jérémie Degruson
	Virginie Dellisse
Technical Manager	Joël Labby
Technical Assistant	Michaël Maree

WALTER CRONKITE FILM UNIT

Director of Photography	Rodney Taylor
Production Coordinator	Scott Fogdall, Bob Hoffman
	Video Productions

Gaffer	Chris Andrus
Key Grip	Kenny Rogers
Grip	David Telliard
Sound Recording	Don Hale
Teleprompter	James Steele
Make-up	Claire Young
Audio Production/Engineering	Invincible Productions
Producer/Engineer	Vince Lubinsky
Catering	Executive Gourmet Catering Co.
EPK Videographer	Tom de Malignon

Theme Song "SOS Planet"
Written and produced by Kyoko Baertsoen & Walter Hilhorst
Performed by LUNASCAPE

Vocals and Keyboards	Kyoko Baertsoen
Guitars and Programming	Walter Hilhorst
Drums	Didier De Vogelas
Bass	Wouter Berlaen
1st Violin	Inge Walraet
2nd Violin	Fabrice Dambrin
Viola	Frank Hellemond
Cello	Koen Hellemond
String Quartet Conductor	Karel Van Marcke

Post Production Services	RPG Productions
Post Production Supervisor	Rick Gordon
Post Production Coordinator	Cathy Hair
Negative Cutting	Tom Kugler
	Raymond Akopyan
Film Laboratory	CFI
Color Timer	Mike Sanders

SPECIAL THANKS
Hans Geels
Peter Heres
Marlene Adler, Chief of Staff - Office of Walter Cronkite

nWave Distribution
Mark Katz
Ken Cosci
Antonietta Pennella

Filmed on location at
The Lodge at Torrey Pines
La Jolla, California

Excerpts from "Concerto for the Earth"
A grupo INI Production
by Bayley Silleck Productions Inc.

Reference material and notes:
Tropical Deforestation, by Gerald Urquhart, Walter Chomentowski, David Skole and Chris Barber, Earth Observatory.

A Storm is Brewing Over our Ocean, by Carl Safina and Mercédès Lee, ZooGoer, 26(2) 1997

Earth's Life needs "greenhouse effect" - USA Today 02/16/2001

3-D Still Pictures
Raymond Huerta

For more information, please visit:

SOS Planet
www.sos-planet.com

WWF-The Netherlands
www.wnf.nl

WWF-International
www.panda.org

nWave Pictures
www.nwave.com

Distributed by nWave Pictures Distribution