



# Final Report

2023/2024 Program Year



## Our Backyard Adventure

---

In the early 1970's my parents, Encounters in Excellence co-founders Rich and Judy Kern, were part of a group of local conservationists who pooled their resources to purchase a nearly 1 square mile tract of Florida wilderness along the Fisheating Creek River. Fisheating Creek is the only free-flowing river feeding into Lake Okeechobee. Not only is this river an important part of the Everglades watershed, but the land surrounding Fisheating Creek is of exceptional ecological importance. This area became the basecamp for and focus of my dad's very first wildlife documentary: "**Wildlife Adventures at Fisheating Creek.**" This, his very first documentary film, was accepted into the prestigious Audubon Film Lecture Series and launched his career.

Today, this unspoiled chunk of wild Florida holds many indelible memories for me and my own family. In the summer of 2021, my dad and I discovered that one of the camera traps we'd deployed on our property had captured a video clip of a healthy, male Florida panther. This elusive apex predator is one of the rarest mammals in North America, narrowly escaping extinction in the 1970's when their population had dwindled to as few as 20 individual cats. The first clip that we captured of this exceedingly rare animal was the inspiration for our newest adventure, "**Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades.**"

Over the next two and a half years, we embarked on a journey of discovery in this land that I quite literally grew up exploring. The resulting film is my most personal project to date. It was also one of my most enthusiastically received programs ever. Between October 19, 2023 and April 18, 2024, over 28,000 students in both South Florida and Stark County Ohio attended one of my live-narrated presentations. I collected an unprecedented 175 Teacher Evaluation surveys, the results of which validated the huge amount of research, location filming, and blood donations to our local mosquitoes.

Below is a summary of data collected during the **Encounters in Excellence, Inc.** 2023/24 program year. A special thank you to all of our financial supporters and community partners who joined us on our mission to educate students about the environment. We greatly appreciate your support which made another successful year possible.



Richard S. Kern  
Executive Director  
Encounters in Excellence, Inc.

# 2023/24 Odyssey Earth Film Series

## Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

# of schools visited	# of presentations given	# of students reached
<b>46</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>25,620</b>

Stark County, Ohio Public Schools

# of schools visited	# of presentations given	# of students reached
<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>&gt;2,600</b>

## Virtual interactions with public schools

# of schools	# of sessions	# of students
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>240</b>

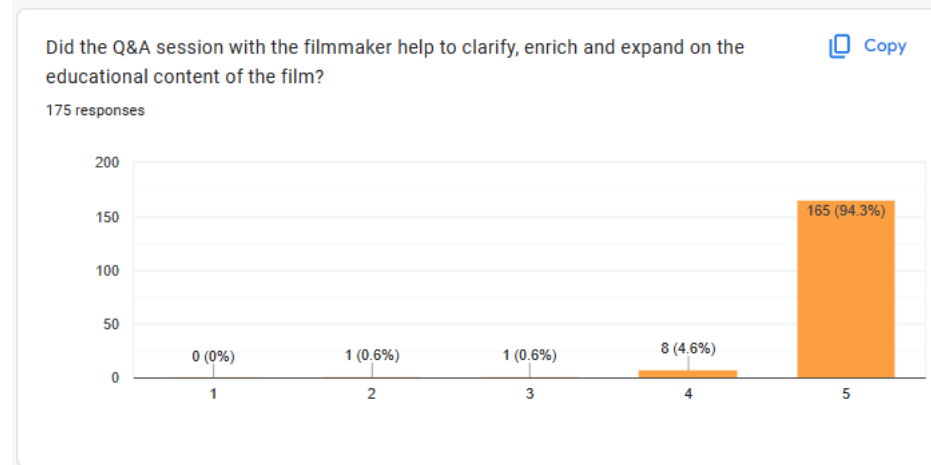
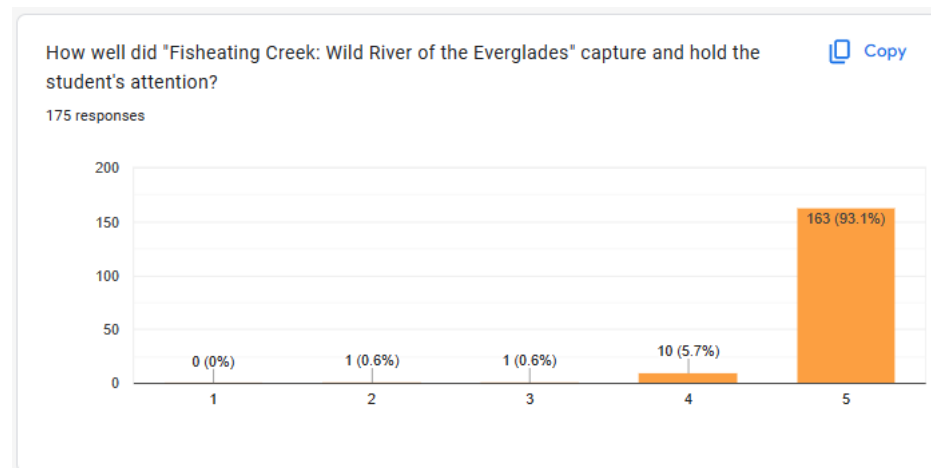
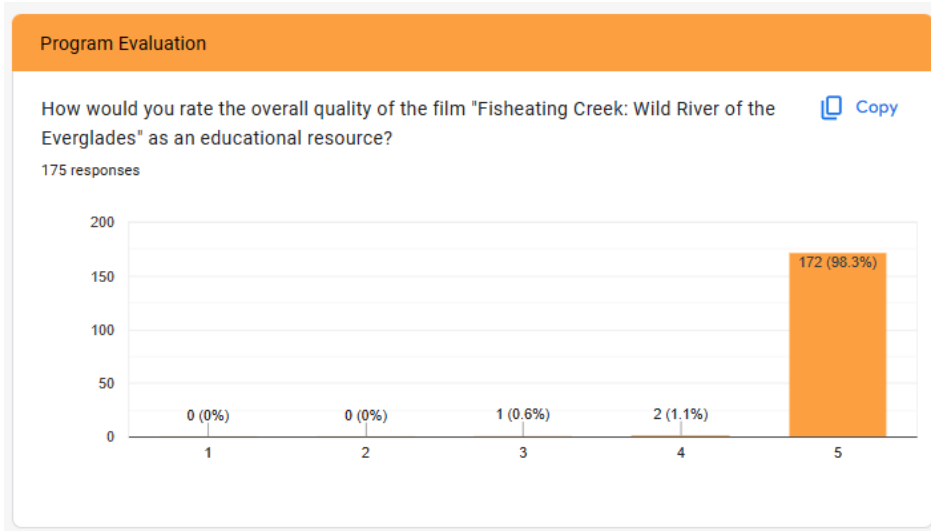
---

## Total Reach

# of schools	# of presentations/ sessions	# of students/ audience members
<b>58</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>&gt;28,460</b>

# Teacher Evaluation Summary

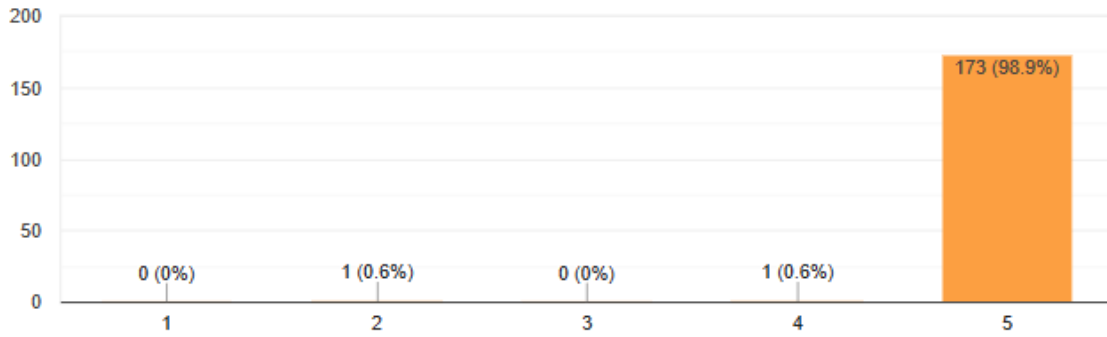
Below is a sample of data compiled from Teacher Evaluations collected during the 20223/24 "Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades" film series. A total of 175 Teacher Evaluations were collected. Full Teacher Evaluation sets can be provided upon request.



Was the filmmaker well prepared to answer the student's questions and engage with the audience?

 Copy

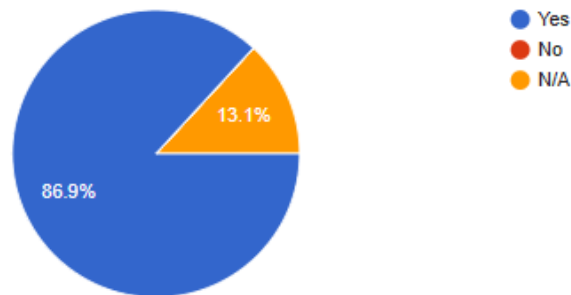
175 responses



Did the presentation promote discussion in your classroom?

 Copy

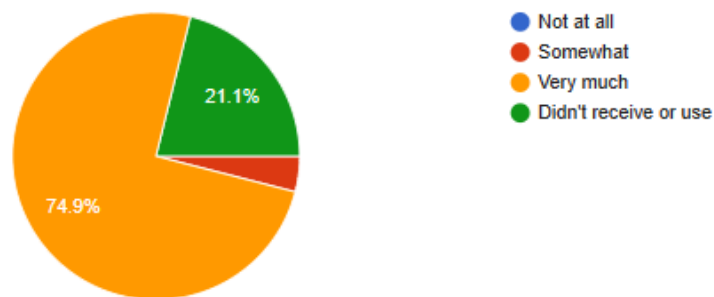
175 responses



Was the supplemental Teacher's Guide useful and appropriate for the grade level(s) you teach?

 Copy

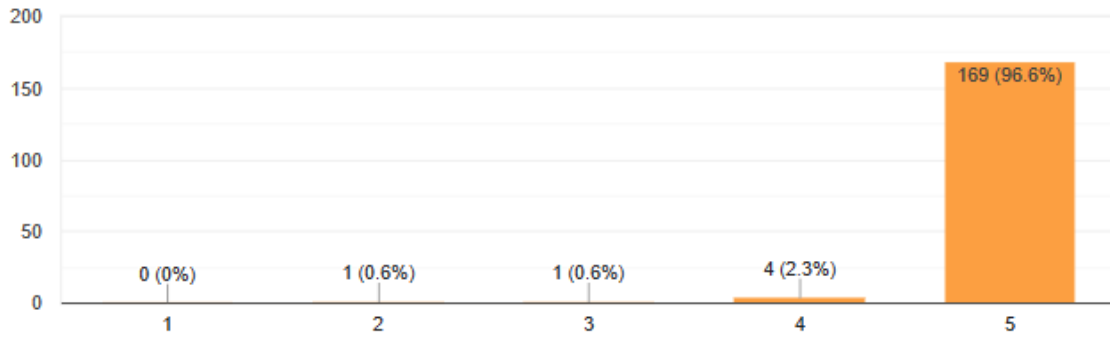
175 responses



How well did "Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades" reinforce the concept that natural ecosystems provide humans with important services and benefits, such as filtering our water?

 Copy

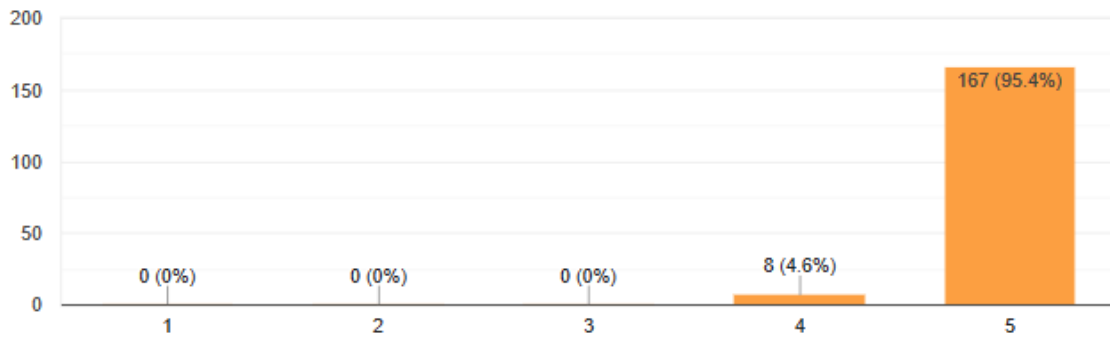
175 responses



How well did "Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades" explain that some animals alter their habitats in a way that is important for the survival of other organisms?

 Copy

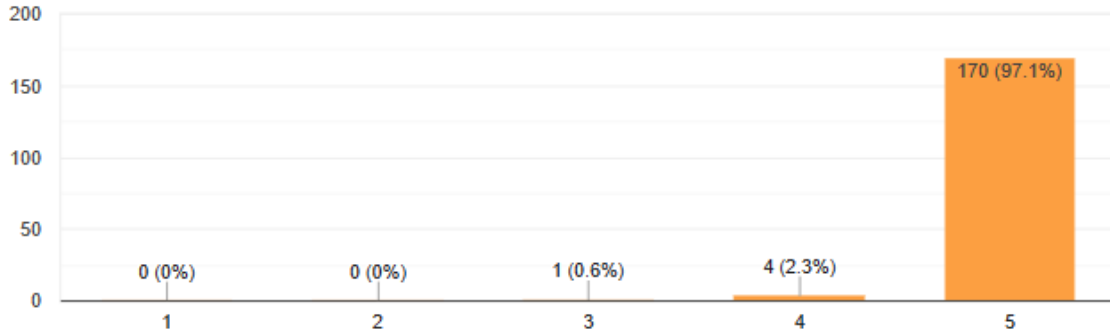
175 responses



How well did "Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades" communicate the importance of preserving wildlife corridors for the sake of imperiled animals?

 Copy

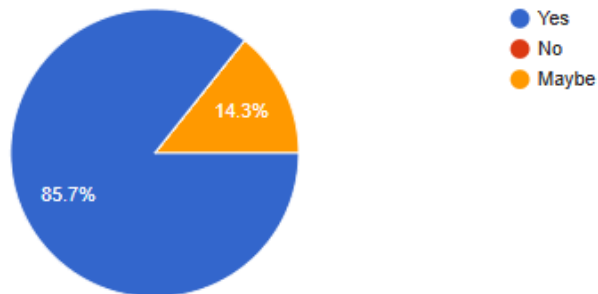
175 responses



According to your observations, did "Fisheating Creek: Wild River of the Everglades" and the interaction with the filmmaker leave your students with an elevated sense of responsibility in the stewardship of our natural resources?

 Copy

175 responses



Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the film-presentation experience?

93 responses

You always do a great job!

Physical exhibits -shells, skeletons and so on.

No, excellent.

Ask the students questions that they would have learn about environment and/or during presentation to make it more interactive (even during presentation)

It was a beautiful, comprehensive and informative. Mr. Kern knows how to keep the audience captivated

It's tough to say considering how wonderfully interesting it was.

No recommendations. Mr. Kern did an outstanding job based on many years of experience.

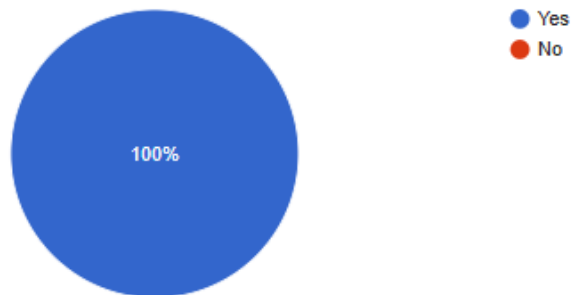
I though the presentation kept the students engaged and was very relevent.

Great film. Amazing experience for my students.

Would you like a similar program next year?

 Copy

175 responses





## 2023/24 Website and YouTube video views

April 16, 2023 – April 15, 2024

OdysseyEarth.com – 2,865 registered teacher users

### Video views

4/16/2022 -4/15/2023	Previous year
<b>14,391</b>	<b>20,488</b>
Percentage increase =	<b>- 30%</b>

### Odyssey Earth YouTube channel video views

14,055 Subscribers

4/16/2022 -4/15/2023	Previous year
<b>663,696</b>	<b>560,081</b>
Percentage increase =	<b>+ 19%</b>