

H2Oil – 11th June

The **co-operative**

and



Present

A film by Shannon Walsh

H2Oil



RELEASE DATE: 11 June

Certificate: tbc

Running Time: 73 min

DOGWOOF

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www.dogwoof.com

www.toxicfuels.com

The Co-operative and Dogwoof

H2Oil is the fifth film to be distributed by The Co-operative and Dogwoof, whose partnership was announced at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival to help socially conscious films reach mainstream cinema audiences. The two businesses will jointly finance the marketing and distribution costs associated with campaigning films. One of The Co-operative's major campaigns this year is Toxic Fuels, which aims to combat the shocking global trend of extracting oil from unconventional sources, such as tar sands and shale oil. Such exploitation threatens global efforts to avoid dangerous levels of climate change and risks local ecological disaster. The Co-operative is supporting H2oil as part of this campaign, to help raise awareness of the issue and to motivate people to take action.

Paul Monaghan, Head of Social Goals and Sustainability at The Co-operative, said "We recognise the power of film to motivate people to take action and drive change, and we are confident that this important film will help raise awareness for the massive environmental damage being caused by the exploitation of Canadian tar sands."





Synopsis

Ever wonder where America gets most of its oil? If you thought it was Saudi Arabia or Iraq you are wrong. America's biggest oil supplier has quickly become Canada's oil sands. Located under Alberta's pristine boreal forests, the process of oil sands extraction uses up to 4 barrels of fresh water to produce only one barrel of crude oil.

It goes without saying that water — its depletion, exploitation, privatization and contamination — has become the most important issue to face humanity in this century. At the same time, the war for oil is well underway across the globe. A struggle is increasingly being fought between water and oil, not only over them.

Alberta's oil sands are at the centre of this tension. As the province rushes towards a large-scale extraction, the social, ecological and human impacts are hitting a crisis point. In only a few short years the continent will be a crisscross of pipelines, reaching from the arctic all the way to the southern US, leaving toxic water basins the size of Lake Ontario, and surface-mines as large as Florida.

H2Oil follows a voyage of discovery, heartbreak and politicization in the stories of those attempting to defend water in Alberta against tar sands expansion. Unlikely alliances are built and lives are changed as they come up against the largest industrial project in human history.

Ultimately we ask what is more important, oil or water? And what will be our response? With hope and courage H2Oil tells the story of one of the most significant, and destructive projects of our time.



Director's Statement

Like many artistic ideas, the story of H2Oil developed through a very personal encounter. Five years ago our old friend Aaron Mathers left Montreal to build a log cabin just outside Hinton Alberta for the love of his life, Cathy Gratz. Last fall, Aaron and Cathy made a trip back to Montreal for the wedding of a close mutual friend of ours. Under the crisp autumn stars at the wedding reception, Cathy urgently described what was happening to Alberta, and to the fresh water spring that had been in her family for generations. The water that as Canadians we thought we had so much of, she explained, was under attack by the oil and gas companies right in her backyard. After a number of trips through Alberta to witness first-hand their story and the real impacts of the oil sands, my commitment to making this film became unshakable.

We are not alone. More and more people are realizing the urgency of protecting our water, and the people that depend upon it. It goes without saying that water – its depletion, exploitation, privatization and contamination -- has become the most important issue to face humanity in this century. At the same time, the war for oil is well underway in the tar sands. A struggle is increasingly being fought between water and oil, not only over them. As our film bears witness, Alberta is at the centre of this tension. As the province rushes towards a large-scale extraction, the impacts on human and environmental health are hitting a crisis point. This is a personal film and it is a political film. It is a story about real people, not abstract impacts. It is a visual story, built on the sounds and the images that are quickly diminishing in Alberta. It is not with nostalgia, but with hope, that we will attempt to make this place, and the people within it, come alive.

www.dogwoof.com
www.toxicfuels.com



Filmmakers and Crew

Shannon Walsh – Writer and Director

Shannon Walsh is a filmmaker and writer who splits her time between Canada and South Africa. Her short fiction and documentary films have screened around the world from Bangkok to Rio De Janeiro at festivals such as the Brooklyn International Film Festival, Women in the Director's Chair and the Durban International Film Festival. H2Oil is her first feature film.

Sergio Kirby & Sarah Spring – Producers

Producers Sergio Kirby and Sarah Spring have recently completed the feature documentary *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line* (Télé-Québec, Bravo!), and the 16mm dance short *Transfert* for Bravo!FACT with the music of Kid Koala. They are currently in development on *Stealing the Spotlight*, a vérité look at the power and perseverance of the unstoppable Patsy Gallant.

Sergio is currently producing the documentary *Vanishing Currents* for Bravo!, and he produced and directed the Radio-Canada / NFB documentary *Wal-Town*, a biopic adventure story about Wal-Mart protesters. Sarah is producing and directing a fictional short about parabolas.

Étienne Gagnon & Sophie Leblond – Editors

Étienne Gagnon has worked as an editor for more than a decade on projects including the feature length documentaries *?!Révolucion!?* and *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*, the Télé-Québec series *Contact*, and current affairs programs for Radio-Canada Television.

Sophie Leblond is an award winning editor whose works include *Elle Veut le Chaos*, *Continental* (Bayar d'Or, Namur 2007, Best Canadian First feature Film, TIFF 2007), *Panache*, *Une Crabe dans la Tete* and *Un 32 Aout sur la terre*, which was a selection in Un Certain Regard at Cannes. Sophie edited Denis Villeneuve's film *Next Floor*, which won the grand prize for short films at the Cannes Film Festival

Alan Kohl – Cinematography & Additional Direction

Alan Kohl shot and directed the innovative feature documentary *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*, which follows a Montreal street artist's unexpected rise to international acclaim. Alan is also working on *Vanishing Currents*, a Film chronicling the extraordinary voyage of a theatre troupe embarking on their first European tour.

Daniel Lagacé - Sound Designer

Co-founder of Montreal's Studio Plateau, Daniel has been a studio engineer for over a decade and has worked on numerous music and film projects. He has worked with artists including Jorane, Memphis, and The Dears, and his film credits include *Descendent* and *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*. Contact NixAudio

Beckie Foon & Ian Ilavsky - Original Score

Rebecca Foon is a cellist, composer and producer. She has been a member of diverse musical projects, most notably Esmerine, Silver Mt. Zion and Fifths of Seven. Rebecca has composed, arranged, performed and/or recorded with a wide range of artists including Patti Smith, Tom Verlaine (Television), Warren Ellis (Nick Cave, The Dirty Three), Tanya Tagak, and Damian Talyor (Björk). She co-founded Madrona Records in Montréal in 2003. Ian Ilavsky is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and sound engineer. He co-founded Constellation Records in 1997 and curated the Musique Fragile concert series from 1997-1999. Ian has been a core member of numerous musical groups, including Sofa, Re:, Silver Mt. Zion and Diebold.

Additional Credits

Associate Producers for H2Oil are **Noelle Sorbara** and **Candice Soave**, the core production team includes Production Manager **Laurel Sprengelmeyer**, Assistant to the Producer **Selin Murat**, Post Production Technical Direction **Keith Pattington**, and Additional Camera and Assistant Editing **Sebastian Lange**.

Loaded Pictures – Production Company

Loaded Pictures is a dynamic collective of filmmakers and storytellers, founded in Montreal in 2005. Their productions explore the relationship between form and ideas, through Films that examine themes of social justice, current events, art and media.

Music

The original score for H2Oil was composed by Rebecca Foon (Esmerine, Fifths of Seven, Thee Silver Mount Zion) and Ian Ilavsky (Re:, Thee Silver Mount Zion, co-founder Constellation Records) with Eric Craven (Hangedup). Instrumentation on the score features Eric Craven (percussion, guitars, effects), Rebecca Foon (cello) and Ian Ilavsky (piano, pump organ).

Animation

H2Oil's animation sequences were created by Oscar nominated animator James Braithwaite (I Met the Walrus) with Sylvie Trouvé and Dale Hayward of La Moustache Productions. Animation sequences were narrated by Catherine Kidd (English) and Anne-Marie Cadieux (French)

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Technical data:

Aspect ratio: 1.33 : 1

Language: English

Country: Canada

Filming Locations: Alberta, Canada

Sound Mix: Dolby Digital