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★ WINNER · BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT · 2025

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The Origins Foundation

Tides of *Change*

*On a wild, windswept barrier island nearly forgotten by time,
a dedicated team fights to save the ancient lineage of the
Loggerhead Sea Turtle.*

A DOCUMENTARY FILM · 40 MIN · 2024 · GEORGIA, USA

DIRECTED BY ANDREW SEALS · A FILM BY MAGNIFICO MEDIA · HOSTED BY KATIE SAWYER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER DR. ROBBIE KRÖGER · DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX COTE

TIDES OF CHANGE · PRESS KIT

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A DOCUMENTARY FILM • 40 MINUTES • 2024

Tides of Change

LOGLINE

On a wild, windswept barrier island nearly forgotten by time, a dedicated team of conservationists fights a high-stakes battle against invasive predators to save the ancient lineage of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle.

TITLE	Tides of Change
RUNTIME	40 minutes
GENRE	Nature / Conservation Documentary
LOCATION	Ossabaw Island, Georgia
YEAR	2024
FORMAT	4K Digital • 16:9 • 5.1 Surround
LANGUAGE	English
DIRECTOR	Andrew Seals
PRESENTED BY	The Origins Foundation
PRODUCTION	Magnifico Media
AWARD	Best Documentary Short — Spotlight Documentary Awards, 2025

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A sanctuary, and a reckoning.

Ossabaw Island is a 25,000-acre barrier wilderness off the coast of Georgia, accessible only by boat, untouched by paved roads, and held in trust as the state's first Heritage Preserve.

Tides of Change follows the Georgia Department of Natural Resources team as they navigate the delicate balance of protecting vulnerable Loggerhead Sea Turtle nests from destructive feral hogs while honoring the fierce, complicated legacy of the island's late matriarch, Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West.

FULL SYNOPSIS

The work of choosing the wild.

For more than fifty years, Ossabaw Island has been protected by an extraordinary act of refusal. In 1978, Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West turned down generational fortunes from developers and instead sold the island to the State of Georgia for a fraction of its market value, on the singular condition that it would remain forever wild. No resorts. No condominiums. No paved roads. Just marsh, oak, sand, and tide.

Her decision created the first Heritage Preserve in Georgia history. It also set the conditions for everything that followed — including the small team of biologists, technicians, and rangers who today work, often alone and often through the night, to keep the promise her refusal made possible.

Because the wild is no longer self-sustaining. Feral hogs, descendants of livestock introduced to the island centuries ago, have learned to raid the nests of the threatened Loggerhead Sea Turtle. At their peak, they were destroying up to 40 percent of every clutch laid on the island's shores. Without intervention, a species that has nested on these beaches for tens of millions of years would be lost from Ossabaw within a generation.

Tides of Change follows the daily and nightly work of the Georgia DNR team responsible for restoring the balance. Survey crews walk miles of beach before dawn to find and protect new nests. Cody Elrod, the only full-time resident on the island, patrols the dunes after midnight with thermal optics to manage the predators threatening the next generation. The work is uncomfortable, ethically complex, and almost entirely unseen by the public it serves.

And it is working. Through coordinated daytime monitoring and nighttime intervention, nest predation has dropped from a historic 40 percent to a current annual average of 7 percent — one of the most measurable conservation wins on the southeastern coast.

But the film is not a victory lap. It is a portrait of what stewardship actually requires: the labor, the loneliness, the weight of choosing one species over another, and the long inheritance of a place protected by someone else's refusal. *Tides of Change* asks what it means to keep a promise after the person who made it is gone.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Choosing the wild.

“Coming to Ossabaw, I realized conservation isn't just about protection. It's about intervention. It's the uncomfortable, tireless work of humans trying to balance a scale we helped tip. This film is a tribute to the people who choose the wild over the easy path.”

Andrew Seals filmed across multiple seasons on Ossabaw Island, embedding with the Georgia DNR team to document a kind of conservation labor that almost never gets credited: the slow, daily, unglamorous work of keeping a place alive after the headlines have moved on. The film draws its visual language from the island itself — vast aerial sequences across tidal marsh, intimate low-light handheld work in the dunes, and patient cinematography of the Loggerheads themselves, from egg to first crawl.

ANDREW SEALS, Director

Tides of Change

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Winner. Best Documentary Short.

Tides of Change was awarded **Best Documentary Short** at the 2025 Spotlight Documentary Awards, recognized among the year's most compelling and original works of nonfiction storytelling.

Made in Georgia. Celebrated in Georgia. The film was produced entirely on Ossabaw Island and honored at the Atlanta Spotlight Film Festival, with the ceremony held at Limelight Theater on December 6, 2025. A Georgia story, told by a Georgia team, recognized in the state where it was made.

AWARD	Best Documentary Short
AWARDED BY	Spotlight Documentary Awards
YEAR	2025
CEREMONY	Atlanta Spotlight Film Festival Limelight Theater · December 6, 2025

KEY THEMES & TALKING POINTS

For press and programmers.

01. Conservation as intervention

The film dismantles the myth that “wild” places are self-regulating. True stewardship now requires active, often uncomfortable human management — and a willingness to make hard ecological choices.

02. The ethics of choosing one species over another

Feral hogs are intelligent, sentient animals. Loggerhead turtles are ancient and threatened. The team must reconcile the moral cost of lethal management with the survival of a species that predates humanity.

03. Legacy and the long view

Sandy West's refusal to sell to developers is a generational gift. The film asks what it means to inherit, and to honor, a place protected by someone else's restraint.

04. The unseen labor of stewardship

While the public sees beaches and wildlife, the work of preservation happens at 2 AM, alone, in the dark. The film honors the technicians, biologists, and rangers whose names rarely appear in headlines.

05. Place-based storytelling, global resonance

Ossabaw is one specific island, but the questions it raises — about invasive species, climate pressure, and human responsibility — apply to every coastline on Earth.

06. A measurable impact

From 40 percent nest predation down to a 7 percent annual average. The film offers something rare in environmental documentary: a story where the intervention is working, and the data proves it.

FEATURED VOICES

The people in the film.

Cody Elrod

Wildlife Technician, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The only full-time resident of Ossabaw Island. A rugged guardian who lives off the grid and patrols the dunes at 2:00 AM with thermal optics. Cody represents the boots-on-the-ground soul of the operation, and the moral weight of carrying it out alone.

Eleanor “Sandy” Torrey West [\(1913 – 2021\)](#)

The Legacy

The island's late owner, who turned down generational fortunes from developers and instead sold Ossabaw to the State of Georgia for a fraction of its market value. Her one condition, preserved in state law, ensures no paved road or resort will ever touch the island's shores.

Walter Rabon

Commissioner, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The leadership voice of the film. Rabon oversees 1,760 staff across the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, a workforce he describes not as employees but as “rockstars.” For him, conservation is not a career. It is a vocation passed between generations.

ALSO INTERVIEWED

Elizabeth DuBose · Mark Dodd · Andy Meadows

All on-camera interviews conducted by Katie Sawyer.

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For director conversations and panels.

01. *What first brought you to Ossabaw, and when did you know there was a film here?*
02. *How did you reconcile filming the lethal management of one species in service of another?*
03. *How did you build trust with Cody Elrod and the Georgia DNR team to film their nighttime work?*
04. *Sandy West's decision to sell the island in 1978 made everything in this film possible. How did you tell the story of a legacy whose author has passed?*
05. *The film features both vast aerial cinematography and extreme intimacy with the turtles and their eggs. How did you balance the macro and the micro?*
06. *Nest predation dropped from 40 percent to 7 percent. Why isn't this a more widely known success story?*
07. *What ecological pressures threaten Ossabaw beyond feral hogs, and were any of them harder to film?*
08. *What do you want viewers to do after the credits roll?*

CREDITS

Made by a small team for a long time.

PRINCIPAL CREDITS

Presented by	The Origins Foundation
Directed by	Andrew Seals
Hosted by	Katie Sawyer
Executive Producer	Dr. Robbie Kröger
Producer	Bryan Fiscus
Producer	Garrett Frazier
Producer	Brittany Seals
Editor	Matthew Blum
A Film By	Magnifico Media

CAMERA CREW

Director of Photography	Alex Cote
Assistant Camera	Ilya Matyushin
Assistant Camera	Reece Brigman

SPECIAL THANKS

Foundation Partner	Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Foundation Partner	Ossabaw Island Foundation
Former Commissioner	Mark Williams, Georgia DNR
Partner Organization	Georgia Chapter of SCI

CONTACT

For all press inquiries.

FILM & SCREENING INQUIRIES

Dr. Robbie Kröger

Executive Producer · The Origins Foundation

robbie@theoriginsfoundation.org

PRESS & MEDIA RELATIONS

Peter Kelly

Founder · Ship to Shore Communications

Meet@shiptoshorecomms.com

ONLINE PRESS KIT

Full press kit, screener requests, and high-resolution stills available at:

<https://tides-of-change-epk.netlify.app>