

# 10th Annual Water Docs Festival casts eye on local rivers

by Joseph A. Monachino

*"With great power comes great responsibility!" - Spider-Man 2, 2004*

The Water Docs Festival ([www.watdocs.ca](http://www.watdocs.ca)) took place earlier this month, bringing a host of water-themed documentaries and films to Ontario for an anniversary celebration.

I had the pleasure of watching a documentary called: "Last Paddle? 1000 Rivers, 1 Life," directed by Roger Williams.

It is an inspirational and visually stunning film that chronicles the amazing journey of renowned Canadian river advocate Mark Angelo, who paddled more than 1,000 rivers in well over 100 countries, perhaps more than any other individual.

Spanning the globe, the film

chronicles his lifelong commitment to river conservation and restoration.

"Last Paddle" illustrates how many rivers around the world are endangered to become polluted to the point of having no environmental value.

This is a sad fact because rivers, for mankind, are a source of recreation, commerce, and land settlement routes.

The documentary interviewees pinpointed how rivers are polluted almost beyond repair. Two good examples are Yamuna River in India and Burganga River in Bangladesh.

There was a river that was in an unfavourable state several years ago.

That river is the Thames River in London, England. Why it was restored to a relatively healthy state was because a plan was put into place to do so.

To restore rivers to a healthy state takes an action plan to be put into place and the willingness to choose to do so. This is a gargantuan task because it takes the cooperation of hundreds of thousands of people.

In a telephone interview, I had the pleasure to speak with Mark Angelo about river conservation and restoration.

Angelo is Canada's pre-eminent river conservationist. He hails from Burnaby, B.C. and is an internationally-celebrated river conservationist, writer, speaker, teacher and paddler.

He is the founder of both B.C. Rivers Day and World Rivers Day, which takes place on the fourth Sunday in September each year. He founded it in 2005 and is embraced by millions of people in close to

100 countries, making it one of the biggest environmental celebrations in the world.

One of his most significant accomplishments is that he is the first non-governmental appointee to the National Canadian Heritage River Board.

He was a young boy when he went fishing on a river in B.C. By the time he became a teenager, he loved it and became "captivated by rivers and the value of waterways."

He described rivers as "arteries of our planet that rejuvenate the spirit of the soul."

World Rivers Day was established by the United Nations in 2005. He said that there are thousands of events that take place on World Rivers Day by millions of participants.

It is amazing that it started with B.C.

Rivers Day in 1980 by 7,500 participants to what the venerable event has become now.

He is "humbled" that there are comparisons made of him to Jane Goodall, the world's pre-eminent primatologist.

Fifty years ago, river conservationism was a lonely undertaking. Now, Angelo is gratified that there are a lot more river conservationist and restoration champions than there were back then. He feels that "nature can heal itself if given the chance." He pointed out that rivers are "great connectors."

He also says that "we must do all we can to protect river environment and heritage."

Canada does have dozens of rivers that form the backbone of our history and heritage. We must do all we can to protect them.

There are media related initiatives to promote rivers. They run the gamut of films, TV, and writing. In fact, Mark Angelo wrote a book called: "The Little Creek That Could: The Story Of A Stream That Came Back To Life."

It is a tale about a teacher, with the aid of students, who embark on an amazing journey to make a polluted creek return to its former vibrant and healthy state. This book is for young and old alike and is written in a hopeful spirit.

Mark Angelo is "humbled" by the fact that he was the recipient of the Water Warrior Award at this year's Water Docs Festival. It is an award he definitely merits. You can read about him and his river initiatives at [lastpaddle.com](http://lastpaddle.com).

## Jaw-dropping artwork unveiled at local art gallery

Jackson & Munson Studio Gallery have extended their well-received art exhibit, "Destinations, faces, spaces & far-away places" through Nov. 26, featuring the works of mid-career and established artists Gail Backus, Ed Clark, James Lasby, and Michael Brennan with curated pieces from emerging artists Milly Tseng, Kayla Jackson and ecmunson.

The studio gallery, located in Belfountain, will also host a

Holiday Market that has been extended through Dec. 20 and has a treasure trove of eclectic delights to discover with new arrivals weekly!

Textiles and wearable art, jewelry, ceramics and pottery, artisanal jams, dog biscuits, and soaps. Plus, bags from quirky and sassy to sleek and chic, with mini-masterpieces in watercolors, acrylics, oils, and encaustic media.

Holiday and note cards from several artists and photogra-

phers, and seasonal décor, including wreaths.

And for those avid readers, there is a growing selection of books from local authors.

Featured during the Holiday Market is Artists' Choices, favourite picks of artists' new, unframed artworks.

Expect to find scheduled events on weekends such as ...a second Greetings for Readings, regional and local authors reading from and signing their books, Musical Interludes, along with Visit-

ing- Artist-in-Residence Demos.

Enjoy a short jaunt up into those gorgeous Headwaters Dufferin hills and meet local artists who contribute

to the Jackson & Munson Studio Gallery with that "jaw-dropping artwork".

The gallery is located at 15962 Mississauga Road in Caledon - for more infor-

mation and hours, visit the gallery website on Facebook at [facebook.com/JacksonMunsonStudioGallery](https://facebook.com/JacksonMunsonStudioGallery).

