

Remembering Return of the Jedi

April 19, 2023



On June 2 and 3, the Humboldt Del Norte Film Commission will be hosting the 1st annual Forest Moon Festival, sponsored by Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Star Wars Fans, this is the summer event you are looking for.

It will commemorate the 40th anniversary of Return of the Jedi, the Star Wars film that featured Humboldt and Del Norte counties as the forest moon of Endor, the final battleground between the Rebel Alliance and Galactic Empire.

The Forest Moon Festival will span across the two counties. Businesses, pop-ups, community partners, and existing events are invited to theme-out in Star Wars fashion and offer activities for the whole family to enjoy.

The Film Commission is working with stellar community partners to bring free screenings of Return of the Jedi to various locations throughout the region. As the date gets closer, a map and schedule of events will be

released to the public so festival attendees will be able to see all the exciting activities that are happening across the redwood region including Lucasfilm approved costumers (Rebels, Storm Troopers, and more) appearances.

The festival's concept was created over a decade ago as an enhancement to the existing "Map of the Movies" (a free self-guided tour featuring projects that have filmed in both Humboldt & Del Norte Counties and can be found on their website and app stores). "We were trying to expand our film tourism strategy since film tourism can boost local economies more than actual filming at times, when we thought of someday launching a festival like this," stated the Film Commissioner, Cassandra Hesseltine.

Today, Hesseltine says it's more than that for the Film Commission. "Now, it's more our way of giving back to the region by creating community pride through a celebration that will be enjoyed by all ages."

In the Fall of 2019, the Film Commission and community partners had begun brainstorming a possible event, but the pandemic shelved the idea. In 2022, after the Sequoia Park Zoo Foundation and the city of Eureka inquired about a collaboration with the film commission for a May the 4th event, they knew it was time to resurrect the festival.

"We thought this was the first baby-step on our way to something bigger," Hesseltine commented, "It was a very successful and entertaining experience, so we decided to go for the full-fledged event finally for the 40th anniversary this year.

Though, since this is the first time going so big, it feels more like our dress rehearsal as we get buy-in from the community and focus on promoting more locally."

As the festival grows, the Film Commission anticipates more out-of-town film tourists attending the event. Because of this, the Film Commission picked the first weekend of June for the festival since it wouldn't compete with other out of town May the 4th events, hotels availability, and warmer weather for outside activities. Tiffany Miller Designs has been contracted to help produce the weekend due to her and her team's in-depth experience in Hollywood and event coordinating.

For more information on this event (including map and schedule of events, to be released later) you can visit the website www.forestmoonfestival.org. Any business that wishes to participate should visit and follow the directions on the vendor page of the website to be included in the promotional material. Be sure to follow the Forest Moon Festival Facebook page and Instagram @forestmoonfestival to get all the latest updates and announcements.