

Synopsis: The Arctic: Our Last Great Wilderness is the first cinematic exploration of a world few have truly witnessed. We are immersed in this sweeping natural landscape through the perspective of Princess Daazhraiini Johnson of the Neets'aini Gwich'in tribe and the experiences of National Geographic photographer, Florian Schulz on his five-year quest to film the elusive Porcupine Caribou herd as it migrates to the Arctic Coastal Plain. Spectacular scenes featuring polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, grizzlies, golden eagles and more fill the screen with hope that inspires us to take action to save the wondrous Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. With the help of Project Impact, this film has launched the remarkable Protect the Arctic (PTA) impact campaign to help block oil and gas drilling in this pristine wilderness area.

Case Study

The Arctic: Our Last Great Wilderness

(2021) 45 minutes



Creative Design: The film team's visionary change goal set out to help save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by engaging the public with stunning imagery. They sought to inspire awe and action by revealing the striking beauty of this untouched, natural world and the human impact that threatens it. This aesthetic approach draws viewers into an expansive world teeming with life, the antithesis of a barren landscape that has little value for anything but resource extraction. The Giant Screen format was intentionally selected to immerse audiences more fully in the experience, whether 2D or 3D, to create impact that would transform the visceral experience into action. The film features narration from Princess Daazhraiini Johnson who is of the Neets'aini Gwich'in tribe with family from Arctic Village. Her voice and perspective connect viewers to local communities, creating a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the natural world. The film score was designed to enhance tones of awe and wonder to deepen viewers' emotional connections to this refuge's unique beauty.

Collaborative Model: The primary impact mis-

sion of the film is to block oil and gas drilling of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Protect the Arctic (PTA) co-produced micro-films for social media with partner organizations like The Nature Conservancy, Audubon, Alaska Wilderness League and Gwich'in Youth Council to access and influence niche audiences. An indigenous advisory committee of Gwich'in elders and activists guided both the impact campaign and documentary script. They gained perspectives in reaching diverse audiences through coalition partners like Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Native Movement, veterans, and faith groups.

Collaborating with NGOs and legal advisors, PTA determined the public comment period to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was their best chance at preventing oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Refuge. Champion Advocacy Fund worked with impact producer Ru Mahoney and



Project Impact to devise a campaign that applies the power of social media. They sought out influencer Alex Haraus to launch their Rapid Response sub-campaign on TikTok as a Hail Mary attempt to block drilling. Project Impact partnered with indigenous activist group, Native Movement, to create a Storytelling Toolkit that kept indigenous voices at the center. They made this toolkit accessible to TikTok users to make their own videos around the issue.

Outreach Strategies: In addition to their TikTok Rapid Response campaign, the team developed a strategic website designed to appeal to ideologically diverse audiences. Employing corporate marketing tools, they created a flexible site that varies depending on the user's interests. With six versions of each page, they use language empirically shown to build trust and inspire action among targeted psychographic groups.

The impact team applied psychographics to parse social media messaging as well, using specific hashtags and paid boosts to target specific audiences. For example, eco-minded individuals see environmental messaging while hunters view content around subsistence caribou hunting. This ensured the campaign engaged audiences of all backgrounds. The team continues to maintain social media presence not only on TikTok, but also on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Measuring Impact: Protect the Arctic's TikTok campaign was an enormous success, generating 6.3 million letters in the public comment period to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This was the largest response to a federal comment period recorded to date and the permit for oil and gas testing was subsequently denied. The team also learned that TikTok audiences responded more favorably to user-generated content than to stylized content from the film campaign. This is a shift from advocacy that tends to talk "at" viewers to a participatory approach that empowers viewers to generate discussion "about" the film/issue. The film website generated 15-million views before the film was released, with up to a 60% conversion rate on calls to action. This not only made a case for the early launch of the impact campaign, but also helped generate sales of the film by providing distributors information about pre-existing audiences.

On the first day of the Biden Administration, US President Biden immediately halted Arctic drilling leases. The film team is holding private screenings with impact events for Senators such as Maria Cantwell, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, and others. Screening events with the United Nations and impact strategies in key swing states during midterm elections are underway. The Protect the Arctic campaign is expected to continue through 2023.

For a deeper dive into their impact strategies, TikTok toolkit, and more, click for the [Project Impact PTA Case Study](#).