

MIRASOL

LOOKING AT THE SUN

A FILM ABOUT WATER, LAND,
AND A WAY OF LIFE

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Ben Knight
Presented and produced by Palmer Land Conservancy

MIRASOLFILM.COM



MIRASOL

LOOKING AT THE SUN



A film by Ben Knight
Produced by Palmer Land Conservancy

36 minutes | English | 2024

Website: [mirasolfilm.com](https://www.mirasolfilm.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mirasolfilm>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mirasolfilm>

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Big Sky Mountain Film Festival (2024 Big Sky Award Nominee)

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

Big Sky Mountain Film Festival (2024 Big Sky Award Nominee)

5Point Adventure Film Festival (2024)

Pueblo Film Festival (2024)

FILM CONTACT

Kristie Nackord
kristie@palmerland.org

MEDIA CONTACT

Amy Triandiflou
AmyTriandiflouPR@gmail.com

MIRASOL | LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS

Logline

Water is a finite resource — and an essential one. For farmers, it's everything. In the U.S., we're losing 2,000 acres of land every day to development. Years from now, when we look back on this moment, MIRASOL challenges us to reflect on whether we did enough to protect what we hold dear — food, family and cultural livelihood.

Synopsis

Award-winning director Ben Knight explores a national issue, magnified in the American West, around water scarcity, following a multi-generational Italian and Hispanic immigrant farming community living on “The Mesa” in Pueblo, Colorado. The documentary sheds light on their history and heritage, each family sharing their agricultural lineage, one that transcends every aspect of their lives, shaping their culture and livelihood.

Realizing an uncertain future due the West's diminishing water supply, Williams Farm & Seed Store, Musso Farms, Professor Mike Bartolo and Martellaro Family Farms reflect on their passion to grow and nourish their families, communities and pastime.

Nationally we're losing 2,000 acres of land each day. The film explores how rural agricultural communities, and the food they put on our tables, is threatened by rapid development, population growth, climate change and competing economies. MIRASOL challenges us to consider what's at stake and whether we are willing to take action to protect it.



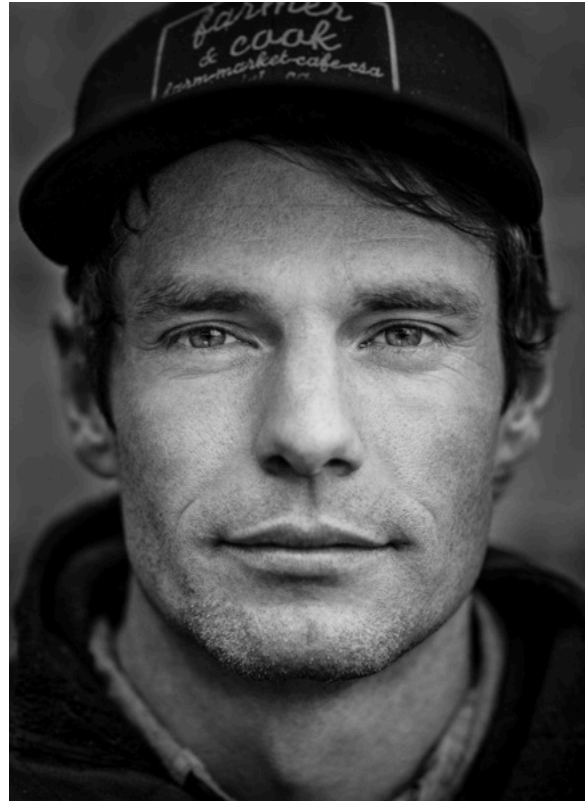
MIRASOL | DIRECTOR

Ben Knight

Ben was first inspired to make documentaries as a young man working behind the projector at Telluride Mountainfilm. Since then, he has become widely acclaimed for his adventure and environmental filmmaking. His films include the feature-length documentary DamNation (premiered at SXSW 2014 and produced in conjunction with Patagonia), The Last Honey Hunter (Mountainfilm 2018; National Geographic), Learning to Drown (Tribeca 2021; The North Face) -- and a myriad of films that masterfully intertwine raw human stories with the grandeur of the natural world.

Director's Statement

"MIRASOL has been a dream project for me. It gave me the opportunity to intimately engage with my Colorado neighbors and the Arkansas River watershed in a special way. The more time I spent out in the fields, family kitchens, and digging into archives — the more I started to realize how incredibly vulnerable and precious this sliver of irrigated mesa is. Before long it became my mission to tell a story that's all too common in agriculture: We are taking these places and these people for granted. My hope with MIRASOL was to simply help remind folks how fragile it all is." – **Director, Ben Knight**



Select Filmography

Learning to Drown - 2021 (The North Face) - Premiered at Tribeca, Winner at Banff Mountain Film
The Last Honey Hunter - 2018 (National Geographic) - Best Documentary at Camden Film Festival
120 Days - 2017 (Yeti) - Mountainfilm
Denali - 2015 - Vimeo Staff Pick - Received 15M views
Damnation - 2014 (Patagonia) - Audience Award at SXSW
Eastern Rises - 2010 - Mountainfilm
Red Gold - 2008 - Mountainfilm

MIRASOL | PRODUCER

Palmer Land Conservancy

Since 1977, Palmer Land Conservancy has worked to conserve over 138,000 acres of land forever. They are a cutting-edge Colorado water and conservation leader committed to developing innovative solutions that balance the competing needs of dwindling water supplies that allow for growing cities, thriving agriculture, and a healthy environment. Palmer has spent the last 8 years working alongside the local Pueblo farmers, community, and local water utility to protect “the Mesa” in the face of an impending dry up.



Producer Statement

“There is nothing more powerful than storytelling and film when it comes to opening people’s eyes and hearts to an issue. MIRASOL challenges us to protect agricultural communities, the lifeblood of our local food system, and stand up for all the hardworking families and thriving fields on the fringes of cities that are so often taken for granted. We’re currently losing the race, and not keeping pace with the need. We made the film to bridge the divide between rural and urban life, igniting a culture shift for conservation and to amplify Palmer’s work on the frontlines of water and farmland conservation in Colorado. As a community, and as a nation, we have a choice to make. What will you choose?” – **Producer, Kristie Nackord, Palmer Land Conservancy**



MIRASOL | FILM SUBJECTS

Mike Bartolo PhD. | Senior Research Scientist (Ret.d), Colorado State University

Bartolo is a third generation farmer. His grandparents came to Colorado for mining and eventually saved enough money to buy a farm. Bartolo, now retired, worked as a senior research scientist and extension vegetable crops specialist at Colorado State University. While he might not see himself as the developer of the legendary Pueblo Chile, others do. While walking through a field he noticed a unique looking Chile pepper. For years he saved the seed and it eventually gave rise to the Mosco pepper, named after his uncle, which ultimately became the original form of the Pueblo Chile.



Dawn DiPrince | Executive Director, History Colorado

DiPrince has been involved with History Colorado for more than 11 years, beginning as the assistant director of the El Pueblo History Museum. For the last few years she's served as the organization's President/CEO and the State Historic Preservation Officer. As a fourth generation Coloradan, she has a deep appreciation for the state's unique and complex history. DiPrince says that it's impossible to separate the practices of agriculture from our culture itself —learning an old tradition is something that becomes a part of you that you can then share with future generations.



Sandy Williams | Williams Family Farm & Seed Store

A little red brick storefront built by the founder of Williams Farm & Seed Store has stood the test of time for 85 years while four generations of the Williams family have kept Pueblo gardeners deeply rooted. Located on The Mesa, the family once offered 70 to 75 different types of seeds from grasses to watermelons, to vegetable and flower starter plants. In 2023, the farm was listed for sale and the family is working toward conservation as a solution to ensure the farm remains in production, forever.



Rocky Musso | Musso Farms

The Mussos have been farming the same land in Pueblo, Colorado for five generations — ever since the family emigrated from Italy. Today, the farm is mostly run by Rocky Musso and his father. For Rocky, the joy he gets from working the farm outweighs any of the negatives: the smell in early spring when everyone starts plowing the fields, the excitement that follows and the happiness he gets to witness when people delight over fresh produce and the iconic scent of roasting chiles. But he worries too, about water, about the land and the sustainability of the lifestyle he loves.



Jace Martellaro | Farmer and Mechanic Jace is a member of Pueblo's younger generation who is eager to take over the family farm. His grandfather, Tony Martellaro, would go work at the mill pouring hot steel and then come and work the farm. As a kid Tony would take field trips to a farm on top of a hill and said that someday he'd own it — he was right. Jace's father builds houses and then comes down and works the farm, and Jace hopes to carry on that tradition and run the farm himself someday. To Jace, keeping the farm in the family and continuing the traditions he's grown up with is of utmost importance.



MIRASOL | FILM IMPACT

One of the most pressing issues of our time in the American West is the dwindling water supply from the Colorado River which is a lifeline for 40 million people and the \$15 billion a year agriculture industry that depends on it. Analysts say the river is in peril and climate change, the result of low snowpack and drought, has put us in crisis.

The impact moves far beyond the Colorado River Basin as 70 percent of water supplies from southern Colorado's largest urban areas in the Arkansas River Basin, Colorado Springs and Pueblo rely on the Colorado River.

Palmer's Bessemer Farmland Conservation Project on the Mesa in Pueblo is an example of solutions that are being developed to balance the competing needs of water between growing cities, the environment and agriculture.

MIRASOL is a catalyst for meaningful change — one where citizens can mobilize to protect land and water for the well-being of nature and people. It is up to us to write the ending of the MIRASOL story with our actions today. Because loving a place is only the beginning; one must have the courage to protect it.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST



VIEW

[Attend a screening](#) and tell a friend.



JOIN

[Become a Palmer member](#) to join the urgent movement to conserve land and water resources.



BUY

Buy local food direct from farmers, ranchers, and purveyors from [Palmer's Local Food Guide](#).



FOLLOW

For news on land, water, and local food, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

palmerland.org | mirasolfilm.com

PHOTO GALLERY

[MEDIA IMAGE GALLERY](#)



MEDIA

Please visit mirasolfilm.com/newspress for links to:

- Logos
- Images
- Press release
- Electronic press kit
- Film trailers
- Poster
- Contacts

FILM SPECS

Category: Short Documentary

Genre: Environmental, Conservation, Family, Farming, Nature

Production: (US) Colorado

Runtime: 36 min 48 sec

Language: English

Shooting Format: RED

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

SOCIAL CHANNELS

Website: <http://mirasolfilm.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mirasolfilm>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mirasolfilm/>

Campaign hashtags and tags:

#mirasolfilm

#protectwhatyoulove

@palmerland

@PuebloChileProud

@ben_knight

CONTACTS

Film Contact

Kristie Nackord
kristie@palmerland.org
719-941-9909

Media Contact

Amy Triandiflou
AmyTriandiflouPR@gmail.com
719-352-5394

FILM CREDITS

Director

Ben Knight

Producer

Kristie Nackord

Field Producer

Dillon O'Hare

Associate Producer

Katie Stjernholm

Original Score

Cleod9

Film Partners

Brandon Johnson & Dr. Paula Dionisio
Lyda Hill Philanthropies
Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District
Gates Family Foundation
Griffis Blessing, Inc.