

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 15, 2009

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Effects of Big Ag on Mississippi River Basin Revealed in New Documentary

**"Big River" Screening at Fleur Cinema in Des Moines
January 7, 2010
with special guest filmmaker Aaron Woolf**

DES MOINES – (Dec. 17, 2009) – Curt Ellis, Ian Cheney and Aaron Woolf, the award-winning filmmakers who created the Iowa-focused documentary *King Corn*, are returning to Iowa with a short film that's making a big impact. *Big River: A King Corn Companion* is a 30-minute documentary about the ecological consequences of industrial agriculture. The Iowa Environmental Council, in partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa, will host a joint fundraiser and screening of the films on Jan. 7 at the Fleur Cinema in Des Moines, beginning at 6 p.m. for \$20.

The filmmakers are available for interviews upon request. Photos and press kit are available at www.bigriverfilm.com. A trailer is also available for easy embedding into online stories.

The screening is open to the public, and all are invited for a special reception at 6 p.m. to welcome filmmaker Aaron Woolf. *King Corn* will begin at 7 p.m., with *Big River* following at 8 p.m. Woolf will host a short question and answer session after the films.

Proceeds from the screening benefit the Iowa Environmental Council and Practical Farmers of Iowa.



In the film *King Corn*, Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis, best friends from college on the East Coast, moved back to the heartland to plant and grow a bumper crop of America's number one grain on one acre of Iowa soil. But when they tried to follow their genetically

modified, herbicide-treated crop into the food system, what they found raised troubling questions about what we subsidize and how we eat.

Big River brings the two friends back to Iowa on a new mission: to investigate the environmental impact their acre of corn has sent to the people and places downstream. Ellis and Cheney trade their combine for a canoe and travel south on the network of rivers that connects their acre to the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Along the way, flashbacks to the soil they plowed, the pesticides they sprayed and the fertilizer they injected lead to new questions, explored by new experts in new places. From the heartland to the hypoxic “dead zone” in the Gulf, *Big River* examines the hidden impacts of industrial farms.

Big River has special relevance to current events: its release comes on the heels of the EPA re-opening its investigation into the safety of Atrazine, the leading herbicide used on corn farms, and in the wake of the federal government announcing \$320 million in funding to reduce fertilizer runoff in the Mississippi basin.

To interview the filmmakers, CONTACT:

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