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A personal journey to discover Rainier “The Mountain”

Seattle, WA, July, 2006 – Emerging Northwest filmmaker Robert Chrestensen will debut his first feature *Below the Clouds / Rainier Impressions* this summer. Follow in his footsteps as the nature videographer reveals the secrets of a Northwest icon – Mount Rainier. His film is an intimate portrait of a truly remarkable mountain painted with beautiful imagery and a captivating original score by Seattle talent Anastasia Workman.

While Mt Rainier is a world-renowned climbing destination, the national park offers so much more. The film focuses primarily on the land below the clouds – the heart and soul of “The Mountain.” Chrestensen artfully depicts the majesty and diversity of this unique mountain environment. The movie has no words so the audience is free to become fully immersed in the spectacular mountain scenery and inspiring music. It not only captures the true essence of this majestic mountain, but also serves as a testimony for wilderness preservation.

This is not a Hollywood production (no film crews, big cameras, dollies or fly-overs), just simply a very personal experience with an extraordinary mountain. Chrestensen spends 4 years filming Mt Rainier while hiking and backpacking with his wife. He uses a compact mini-DV camcorder giving him access to less frequented and hard to reach wilderness locations; often, just himself and camera in solitude. The couple covers over 600 miles and nearly 190,000 feet in elevation gain, and travels to various aspects on the mountain – to high vistas and into spectacular backcountry. Chrestensen discovers the mountain’s secrets and captures rare moments: the changing seasons, pinnacles and valleys, morning mist and evening alpenglow, wind and rain, hidden lakes and tarns, reflections, rain forests and alpine gardens, glaciers, rivers and falls, human drama and quiet wildlife encounters. Through his lens he explores its natural textures, dancing cloudscapes, subtle features and colors, dramatic reliefs, and impressive power.

What was once just a grand playground for the filmmaker feels like home now. “The Mountain” has become an old friend, bringing him endless smiles and challenging him at times. He has grown to love and respect this fragile beauty and strives to present it in a way that will motivate viewers to become faithful wilderness stewards.

Crest Pictures (www.crestpictures.com), Chrestensen’s production company, plans to release *Below the Clouds* on DVD in time for the holidays. To complement the film there will be added bonus features, including a “locations” video gallery; a “Behind the Scenes” discussion with out-takes covering the How, What, Why and Hopes of the filmmaker; and a “Behind the Music” composer’s discussion of her processes and challenges. Crest Pictures is passionate about preserving and protecting our national parks and wilderness. So, the DVD will also include a guide to the seven principles of Leave No Trace, a program designed to educate those who enjoy wild places about the consequences of their actions and the techniques to prevent and minimize their impact.

This Fall watch for free screenings around Puget Sound and the Portland area.

Reviews:

“If you love ‘The Mountain,’ you’ll love *Below the Clouds*.”

— Mike Gauthier, Lead Climbing Ranger, Mt Rainier National Park and Author, *Mount Rainier: A Climbing Guide*

“Loved the music. Flowers, animals, birds, TERRIFIC. Good show!”

— Harvey Manning, Author, *100 Classic Hikes in Washington*

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