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Expedition Blue Planet visits Fort Collins

BY SARAH JANE KYLE

SarahKyle@coloradoan.com

In the tradition of her internationally famous grandfather Jacques Cousteau, Alexandra Cousteau is on a mission to save the waterways of our world.

Traveling in a bus previously used by such big names as Sen. John McCain and musician Paul McCartney, Cousteau and her team visited New Belgium Brewing Company in Fort Collins on Saturday as part of a 138-day, 15,000-mile journey through North America to study and report on the water condition of America's rivers, particularly the Colorado River.

The expedition is the first by Expedition Blue Planet, a partnership between Cousteau's nonprofit Blue Legacy and National Geographic, through North America.

Jonathan Smith, Cousteau's business partner and the producer of Expedition Blue Planet, said the tour hopes to focus more on the work local organizations do throughout the region.

"One of the things we really wanted to do was not just engage people and say that there are water issues we need to think about, but we wanted people to plug into local organizations that we thought were real champions of some of these issues," Smith said.

After researching many local organizations throughout North America, Smith said the nonprofit Save the Poudre campaign kept resurfacing. Cousteau and Smith decided to bring the expedition to Fort Collins to get a closer look.

"We kept coming back around to not only Save the Poudre, but what was going on in the Poudre," Smith said. "It was a really compelling thing for us... we want people in these communities not just to see our work but to plug into these local groups."

Cousteau is expanding the work of her father and grandfather to include not just water issues in the oceans, but also the connection between the inner waterways and the ocean.

"We talk about all these global water issues and all the work that needs to be done to protect our global waterways, but the truth is that the bulk of that work needs to happen in our own communities," Cousteau said. "I am expanding the focus from the oceans to the interconnectivity of our water resources and reminding people that our fresh water and our oceans are connected."

The team will wrap up their tour in Washington, D.C., Nov. 12 after producing more than 30 social-media-style short films about the water condition of America.

"Our job as we see it in the water conversation is to go out to the story and create social media opportunities for people to look into the field and see what an explorer does and what's going on and interact with that," Smith said. "We're a new media and social media continuance of the Cousteau legacy."

Additional Facts

Want to know more?

> To learn more about Alexandra Cousteau's work, visit [www. alexandracousteau.org](http://www.alexandracousteau.org).

> For information about Save the Poudre, go to www.save.thepoudre.org.
