

DELTA FIGHT HITS BIG SCREEN

HUNDREDS TURN OUT IN STOCKTON FOR DOCUMENTARY

By **Alex Breitler**

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Record Staff Writer

They've spent years lobbying in Sacramento - with little success.

They've watched media gloss over their plight - or ignore it completely.

But on Monday night, the people of the Delta found their voice.

Restore the Delta screened its new documentary, "Over Troubled Waters," to a crowd of more than 300 people inside Stockton's Empire Theatre.

The 45-minute film may be the biggest accomplishment for the advocacy group in its six-year fight against a peripheral canal.

And plenty of people came to enjoy the moment - boaters in Hawaiian shirts and flip-flops, businessmen in suits, farmers in button-up plaid shirts. A typically diverse Delta crowd.

"This is pretty exciting," said 63-year-old Pete Corsun, a longtime sailor and surfer who attended with his wife, Kay. "I hope this gives people a greater resolve to take action - not sit back and wait for someone else to do it."

"Over Troubled Waters" came together mostly behind the scenes over a period of three years while Restore the Delta carried on a more public fight with lawmakers and government officials.

The \$250,000 documentary illustrates a new strategy to take its case directly to the people.

"Personally, I think this is a tool to winning the hearts and minds of Californians," said Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, director of Restore the Delta. "What happens with policymakers after that, I can't predict."

Director Russell Fisher, 38, grew up in Stockton, attending St. Mary's High School. He fished and wake-boarded on the Delta, though he wasn't active in the political fight over its water.

Fisher runs family-owned Business Office Systems in Stockton. And when he has time, he makes films for what he calls Media Creations.

He was introduced to Barrigan-Parrilla and quickly embraced the "Over Troubled Waters" project as his first major documentary.

A friend helped get Fisher in touch with experts to capture the beauty of the Delta from the air and to write an original musical score. They also found a narrator in Ed Begley Jr., an actor and environmentalist.

The project wasn't easy. California water is a complex story, one often told in terms of cubic feet of water using bar graphs and charts. The challenge was to get normal people to care.

The film does that, Fisher said, through its imagery and its focus on the people of the Delta.

The idea, he said, is to balance out the negative publicity the Delta often gets from major media.

"When you're up against the massive corporate agribusiness and people who want to basically sell water, which is what it boils down to, there's a lot of people that want to have a certain message pushed out there," he said. "I think this is going to balance the playing field a bit."

Contact reporter Alex Breitler at (209) 546-8295 or abreitler@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/breitlerblog.

If you missed it

The next screening of "Over Troubled Waters" will take place Aug. 28 in Los Angeles. However, Restore the Delta is hoping to have additional showings in Fresno and the Bay Area, and perhaps another in Stockton.

The hope, the group says, is to eventually distribute the documentary to Rotary clubs and church groups — ordinary people up and down California who might eventually have to help pay for a peripheral canal.

Information: overtroubledwaters.org

http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120821/A_NEWS/208210313/-1/A_NEWS

[watch 5-minute movie trailer at: <http://overtroubledwaters.org/>]