

6-23-2016

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## Recommended Citation

Schultz, Megan Tanner, "Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2016" (2016). *Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research Publications*.  
344.  
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# **Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2016**

Missoula, Montana

Megan Tanner Schultz, M.S.

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Case Study Report 2016-10  
June 23, 2016

This report was funded by the Lodging Facility Use Tax.

## Abstract

This study was conducted for the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees of the 2016 annual festival in Missoula, MT. Paper surveys were completed by 288 attendees at the event and another 146 email surveys were completed by attendees after the event concluded. Results show that 83% of respondents were residents of Montana and of those Montana residents, 88% were from Missoula County. Out-of-county respondents spent an average of 5.25 nights in Missoula and more people spent money on restaurant/bar, hotel/motel/b&b purchases, and retail while visiting the area than any other spending categories. Restaurant/bar purchases received the highest total dollars spent during the event. Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of \$55,229.00 in Missoula during the event. Results provide event organizers at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival with useful data for future event planning, making improvements to the event, event marketing/promotion, and understanding the visitor spending associated with the event.

## Executive Summary

The Big Sky Documentary Film Festival attracted out-of-county Montana residents (10%) and out-of-state (16%) visitors to the Missoula area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the film festival.

- 37% of respondents reported this was their first time visiting Missoula.
- 86% of respondents indicated the event was their primary reason for being in the area.
- 76% of visitors who reside outside of Missoula County spent at least one night away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Missoula for the festival was 5.25 nights.
- More money was spent by respondents in restaurant/bar (\$18,541.00), hotel/motel/b&b (\$18,358.00), and retail (\$6,578.00) than other spending categories.
- 25% of respondents reported staying in a hotel/motel/b&b, 21% reported staying at the home of a friend/relative followed by 6% staying in a rented cabin/home.
- Attendees were mostly travelling alone (28% group type of self) or as a couple (27%). The average travel group size was 1.93 people (travel group spending size).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 55-64 years old (70%), 35-44 years old (27%), 25-34 years old (26%), and 45-54 years old (24%) with a mean age of 48 years old.
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from word of mouth (67%), the newspaper (36%), posters (30%) or email from event planner (26%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were very satisfied or satisfied with the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, and 91% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

## Management Implications

The Big Sky Documentary Film Festival event attendees are travelling from both near and far to attend. This event brings both residents and nonresident visitors to the Missoula area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of economic contributions while visiting.

The largest percentage of spending reported by attendees was in the Restaurant/bar category, indicating that people value a variety of dining, beverage, and food establishments. Organizers can focus on encouraging and supporting an increase of diverse dining merchants in order to satisfy the needs of event attendees.

It is recommended that the organizers review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain more insight into attendees' likes and dislikes of the festival's organization, event cost, concessions available, parking, signage/directions, and other aspects of the event. Changes based on this input could help bring back repeat visitors to the festival and Missoula in the future.

## Introduction

The 2016 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival was hosted in Missoula, Montana over ten days from February 17<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It was the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival event and took place across multiple venues in the city. The Festival shows an average of 150 non-fiction films each year through a variety of events.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2016 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival event with an understanding of the characteristics of visitors of the festival, visitor spending in Missoula County, and levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the festival.

## Methods

Surveyors recruited by the organization intercepted festival visitors 18 years of age or older for on-site completion of a questionnaire during the ten day event. Surveys were given to people by random selection in an attempt to represent the event attendee population. People willing to fill out the questionnaire were given a clipboard, pen, and a survey. No documentation of the number of refusals was recorded. After the festival ended, the same survey was sent to an email list compiled by Festival staff. With both methods, an incentive was provided for survey completion.

### Limitations

As in all research, there are limitations to the study. Limitations for the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival study include the following:

- Data was collected by festival volunteers who received information on how to intercept people and how to obtain completed surveys.
- The email list used included individuals who did not necessarily attend this year's festival.
- The sample size for out-of-county respondents is low.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.

## Results

Of the 432 valid respondents, 83 percent (359 people) were from Montana and 17 percent (73 people) were from out of state or were international visitors (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). Of all Montana respondents, 88 percent (317) were from Missoula County while 12 percent (43 people) were from other Montana counties.

**Table 1: Residence of all Respondents**

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Missoula County	317	73%
Other MT County	43	10%
Montana=360		
U.S. State	67	16%
International	4	<1%
Non-Montana Unspecified	1	<1%
Total all Residences	432	100%

**Table 2: Out-of-State Residences**

<b>Residence</b>	<b># of respondents</b>
Arizona	1
California	17
Connecticut	1
Florida	1
Georgia	1
Idaho	1
Illinois	4
Maryland	2
Massachusetts	1
Michigan	1
Minnesota	1
Missouri	1
New York	13
North Carolina	4
Oregon	3
Texas	3
Utah	1
Washington	10
Wyoming	1

**Table 3: International Residences**

Alberta, Canada	1
Australia	1
France	1
Netherlands	1

The mean age of respondents was 48 years old. Of those who were from outside Missoula County and responded to the survey, 76 percent (98 people) reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (21 percent) spent four nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Missoula County was 5 nights. A full breakdown of nights spent as well as results of all other questions in this survey can be found in Appendix A.

## **Expenditures**

Spending information was asked of all the festival visitors who reside outside of Missoula County, Montana. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family/travel group (if applicable) spent in Missoula County in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, local transportation, auto rental, retail goods, and entertainment or recreation.

Table 4 presents the expenditure data of only the respondents who reported spending money in the categories. The mean expenditure of those who spent money for each category can be found along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The last column provides the total dollars spent by those respondents in each category. The total reported expenditure for respondents who spent was \$55,229.00

**Table 4 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only respondents who spent**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Mean expenditures of attendees <u>who reported that they spent money in these categories</u></b>	<b>% of respondents who reported spending money in each category</b>	<b>Total dollars spent in each category <u>by respondents who spent</u></b>
Restaurant/bar	\$195.17 (n=95)	83%	\$18,541.00
Motel/hotel/b&b	\$305.97 (n=60)	52%	\$18,358.00
Retail goods	\$146.18 (n=45)	39%	\$6,578.00
Groceries/snacks	\$61.70 (n=56)	49%	\$3,455.00
Entertainment/recreation	\$101.32 (n=34)	30%	\$3,445.00
Gasoline	\$53.41 (n=46)	40%	\$2,457.00
Auto rental	\$204.44 (n=9)	8%	\$1,840.00
Local transportation	\$69.38 (n=8)	7%	\$555.00
Licenses, fees, admissions	\$27.75 (n=28)	8%	\$777.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$55,229.00</b>

## Appendix A- Results

**Q1. Are you a resident of Montana? n=432**

83% Yes 17% No (skip to Q3.)

**Q2. Do you reside in Missoula County? n=360**

88% Yes (skip to Q13. on back) 12% No (skip to Q4.)

**Q3. In what state, province, or foreign country do you reside?**

See Tables 1, 2, and 3.

**Q4. Is this your first time visiting Missoula? n=113**

37% Yes 63% No

**Q5. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=112**

86% Yes 14% No

**Q6. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=67**

6% Vacation/recreation/pleasure 1% Just passing through 4% Business/convention/meeting  
9% Visiting friends/relatives 2% Shopping

**Q7. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=114, Mean=4.89**

14% 0 (skip to Q.11) 4% 1 20% 3 8% 5 4% 7 1% 9  
11% 2 21% 4 4% 6 4% 8 10% 10 or more

**Q8. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=95, Mean=5.45**

0% 0 13% 2 24% 4 6% 6 3% 8 8% 10 or more  
5% 1 24% 3 8% 5 5% 7 2% 9

**Q9. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Missoula? n=96, Mean=5.25**

1% 0 nights 14% 2 nights 24% 4 nights 5% 6 nights 2% 8 nights 7% 10 or more  
5% 1 night 25% 3 nights 7% 5 nights 6% 7 nights 2% 9 nights

**Q10. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Missoula? (Check all that apply.) n=95**

25% Hotel/motel/B&B 0% Private campground 0% Resort/condominium  
6% Rental cabin/home 21% Home of friend/relative 0% Guest ranch  
1% Public land camping 0% Second home/cabin/condo 3% Vehicle in parking lot



**Q11. Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money in US dollars you (and your family/travel group, if applicable) spent in the Missoula County area in each of the following categories. If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank. (see Table 4 for expenditures).**

**ACCOMMODATIONS in Missoula**

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

**FOOD in Missoula**

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

**TRANSPORTATION in Missoula**

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

**RETAIL/SERVICES in Missoula**

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

**Q12. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? N=106; mean= 1.93**

48% 1	10% 3	3% 5	1% 7	0% 9	1% more than 10
32% 2	5% 4	0% 6	0% 8	0% 10	

**Q13. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=415**

28% Self	8% Immediate family	16% Family/friends	2% Business associates
27% Couple	2% Extended family	16% Friends	1% Organized group/club

**Q14. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=406 for each age category**

1% 0-5 yrs.	6% 11-17 yrs.	26% 25-34 yrs.	24% 45-54 yrs.	19% 65-74 yrs.
2% 6-10 yrs.	10% 18-24 yrs.	27% 35-44 yrs.	30% 55-64 yrs.	3% 75 and over

**Q15. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=388**

12% Less than \$20,000	17% \$60,000 to \$79,999	2% \$150,000 to \$199,999
19% \$20,000 to \$39,999	13% \$80,000 to \$99,999	4% \$200,000 and over
19% \$40,000 to \$59,999	14% \$100,000 to \$149,999	

**Q16. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=402**

9% The day of the event	25% 1-4 weeks before the event	18% Over 6 months before the event
26% 1-7 days before the event	22% 1-6 months before the event	

**Q17. How did you hear about the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival? (Check all that apply.) n=396 per selection**

<b>67%</b> Word of mouth	<b>30%</b> Posters	<b>4%</b> Retail outlet	<b>4%</b> Other website
<b>36%</b> Newspaper	<b>3%</b> Magazine	<b>13%</b> Flyer	
<b>20%</b> Radio	<b>26%</b> Email from event planner	<b>23%</b> Event website	
<b>12%</b> Television	<b>3%</b> Group or club	<b>23%</b> Social media	

**Q18. Please rate your satisfaction with the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival:**

Satisfaction	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	3%	2%	5%	22%	67%	4.48	n=390
Event staff	3%	1%	4%	17%	76%	4.64	n=385
Cost of the event	2%	1%	10%	29%	58%	4.39	n=378
Location of the event	3%	1%	2%	22%	73%	4.62	n=386
Concessions available	3%	4%	15%	30%	48%	4.16	n=353
Number of people at the event	3%	1%	11%	32%	54%	4.33	n=378
Parking	3%	3%	13%	35%	47%	4.20	n=335
Sound system	2%	2%	5%	32%	60%	4.46	n=384
Variety of activities	3%	<1%	9%	26%	63%	4.46	n=356
Signage/directions	3%	3%	9%	29%	57%	4.35	n=361
Cleanliness	2%	<1%	4%	25%	68%	4.56	n=383
Availability of restrooms	3%	1%	4%	28%	64%	4.51	n=378

\*N/A responses were re-coded to be a missing response for the most accurate mean score.

**Q19. How many films have you seen so far at the festival? Range= 0-95; mean= 7.42**

**Q20. How many additional films will you see at the festival? Range= 0-40; mean= 2.88**

Total films... Range= 0-95; mean= 10.31

**Q21. If from Missoula, please skip to Q23. If not from Missoula, do you think a film festival like this would work in your home community? n=88**

59% Yes 41% No

**Q22. Why or why not? See Appendix B**

**Q23. What is your age? Range=21-81, Mean=47.74**

**Q20. What is your gender? n=400**

38% Male 58% Female

**Q21. When might you come to this festival again? n=391**

91% Next Year 8% Within 5 Years 1% Never

**Q22. Please tell us what you liked about the Montana Folk Festival in Butte, Montana.**

See Appendix B

**Q23. Please tell us what you did not like about the Montana Folk Festival in Butte, Montana.**

See Appendix B

**Q24. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?**

See Appendix B

## Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

### Q22. Why or why not? (...do you think a film festival like this would work in your home community?)

#### Would work...

Already have a film festival.
Beacon, NY is a small community at the base of the Hudson Highlands, smaller than Missoula so perhaps a smaller version would be available. We have an independent film festival that is well attended, but nothing that focuses on documentary. There are a LOT of documentary filmmakers in the area. It could be a success.
Because Billings has a community interested in film- especially independent.
Because it's great!
Billings needs exposure to the art of documentaries.
Butte, MT has excellent festivals! Venues might be tougher to come by, but it would be fun!
Collection of films was diverse enough, and gives voice to filmmakers not necessarily mainstream. Great to spotlight them and let others see creative work
great for community socialization, much needed
I have friends who were intrigued by the films I described to them. I know of two schools with large screens and decent auditorium facilities in the Bitterroot. I would hope that doing a satellite film festival would be appealing as it is a long drive to Missoula and back.
I think Billings is a good market for a short festival at a few select venues downtown. If marketed well, I believe there will be a strong audience.
I'm in San Francisco and help run the SF Doc Fest. It works!
important topics and great community gathering
It depends, mainly because there are a lot of film festivals based in LA.
Many already do.
Movie are always sold out in my community every weekend. People are craving for great family entertainment.
People are generally interested in film, especially docs
Perhaps not enough folks available mid day for screenings?
Portland is Missoula times 19!
Pulling off a festival like this takes the hard work and dedication of some amazing people. Missoula and its people showed how wonderful they are. People in my home community can do the same with some guidance and perseverance.
Raleigh has a vibrant film community and no doc festival.
Scale
Seattle in particular could use a documentary film festival like this!
Seattle international film festival exists!!
Similar theatre set-up, local businesses.
The appeal is universal.
The festival created a great sense of community amongst the filmmakers.
The festival proved that high quality films and great marketing and organization can transform any size community.
The quality of the offerings.
There are many already.
There's always an audience for documentary film.
Variety of genres, speaks to everyone
We do already have SXSW and Austin Film Festival etc.
We have a great little "art house" theater that is thriving and growing. It sponsors a film festival already (not documentary though).
We have three already and they're great.
Would love to see the Best of shown in Hamilton

**Would not work...**

Adjacent (Ravalli County), and too redneck!
Chicago is saturated
Conrad, MT (would not work)
Helena is dull, filled with homebodies
I am from St. Louis. We have a very large festival.
It's too big
Lolo!
Missoula is unique in the sense that the community really comes together to support the festival. I'm not so sure that people in New York City would care to be as close-knit as the community of Missoula.
My home town is too large
No infrastructure comparable.
No three theaters within walking distance
Not a large enough community.
Not as many independent theater venues in walking distance from each other
Not big on documentaries here.
Not like this. I'm from Billings; we can't support a festival this badass and extensive. Maybe a tiny one.
Our town is too small to support an event like this.
Our town lacks the volume of progressive audience for non fiction film.
Probably.
Proximity to Missoula, and "Ravalli County Rednecks" are more of a "Smokey and the Bandit" crowd (they don't tend to favor documentaries)
Seattle already has one.
Small community
There are too many festivals already in my community.
to conservative
too much of a tourist town
too big
Too close proximity to Missoula.
Too close to Missoula
Too close.
too small
Too small
Too small a population.
Too small of a town! Missoula was the perfect size for a festival like this.
Too small of a town.
Too small.
Unique to Missoula. Great town, smart people, great vibe. Unusual setting
Working as a sponsor

**Q26. Please tell us what you liked about the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.**

#numbers of films to select from to view
5 stars
Access to filmmakers and seeing a lot of different venues
Accommodations, thought provoking. Human interaction and participation.
After attending every year since 2005 this year everything seemed to be very organized and smooth.
Age appropriate films grouped together for kids after school, Q/A with directors, trailers on website

all different lengths of films
All films except Nallva. All film directors present.
All good!
All of it
All of it. Good choice of genre, good stories
All of the films are worth watching especially for someone who interested in reading and writing non-fiction
All the different stories, ideas, people, and places in the films. The variety and the surprises. The pass. The Wilma. The intro trailer. Courtney B's poster art, and the eyeballs.
Always interesting, well organized.
Amazing selection, lots to do and see, great filmmakers come to town to participate.
Amazing selections, emphasis on artistry, human rights, diversity, environment and wilderness issues. Staff are unfailingly patient and friendly even after 10 days of socializing!
As always, most of the films are great - very interesting.
Awesome!
Awesome.
Been going since inception.
Brave wonderful filmmakers, cutting edge education, wonderful volunteers who put in a lot of hours (myself included).
BSDFF opens Montanans to the whole length and breadth of our human experience, far beyond our borders.
Can't say yet, but I always love it!
Choice of films, variety of subjects, various price of admission options.
Community involvement
Creative, intelligent and humane.
Decent selection and exposure to some good programming.
Different locales
Different movies, broad range
Director appearances. Unusual films.
Diversity
Diversity
Diversity of films
Diversity of films
Diversity of films, Q and A, appropriate for teens.
Diversity of films.
Diversity of films.
Diversity of films.
Diversity of options.
DocShop! Would love to have more workshops!
Doc-shop, films and fact directors and others answered questions right after films. met some awesome individuals.
Documentaries
Documentaries.
Ease to get to the theatre- lots to do.
Easy access.
Eclectic films. The setup at the Wilma was SO much better this year with only one movie, clearer signage, better sound insulation from the lobby, two concessions areas, etc.
Educational.
Enlarging my knowledge and interests.
Entertaining and enlightening.
Even though I might not have been interested in a film initially I was always surprised at the content and quality. Often the films I thought might not be interesting...proved to be highly interesting

Everything
everything
Everything- fell in love with the documentaries.
Everything!
Everything!
Everything!
Everything!
Everything, diversity
Everything, it's one of the best evenings I've had in a long time. This was my first year, and I can't wait for next years festival.
Everything.
Everything.
Everything.
Everything. It was my first time attending. This is an awesome and amazing event. I turned into a film junkie over the ten days the films were here. I was able to attend some films on my lunch hour. That is a great idea to have that available. The variety of films is amazing, from international and beyond. I look forward to next year.
everything. the people, socializing, learning, seeing incredible films, partying, ... all of it.
Everything—well organized, fun, great opportunities for meeting people, great parties, great films.
Excellent diversity of film subjects, opportunity to volunteer and get comp tickets for doing so
Excellent films.
Excellent films. I love docs. Access to filmmaker Q & A
Exciting audiences.
Expanded Doc Shops (excellent!!!), Films (great again this year), networking with filmmakers and audience
Exposure to interesting films!
Extraordinary work, both info wise and artistically
Fabulous work by film directors
Fantastic
Fantastic program, everyone who worked for it was so sweet, smart and helpful. Loved that there were nightly activities as well as day. Great that films screened multiple times
Felt like a festival for filmmakers that was also open to the public - nice way to meet other filmmakers from around the country.
Film Selection, 'The story of Stuff' talk. Shorts selection. Roxie sound was incredible.
Films
Films
Films
Films developed by new faces!
Films I was able to attend were totally worth it.
Films, brings people/culture to Montana
Films, comments from directors, venues
Films.
Films.
films. that is why we go. I like films
Finding out more about things I haven't had time to learn about.
First film seen, more to come.
First film- theatre.
Focused only of documentary films!
Friendly volunteers, helpful.
Friendly.

good selection of films and engaging topics
Good Variety of films.
Great documentaries!
Great films
Great films - "Left by Choice" and "Catching the Sun", and Ondi's films plus the special treat of live phone call to a family member from the cult film. Also loved the Bug film with all the local "stars." present.
Great films, good for local economy. Good way to show Missoula to visitors.
Great films, tough subjects and light subjects.
Great films.
Great films.
Great films.
great films. pleasant, accommodating staff. liked the spacing between showings, no sense of rushing
Great films. Great variety. Many different showtimes - i like that there were many more films during the day/ during the week than usual.
Great films. Programming at DocShop.
Great location
Great movies -= Location - Staff
Great movies local in Missoula.
Great selection of films and schedule.
Great selection of films.
Great selection of films.
Great variety
Great variety
Great variety of films!
Great variety of films. We went through and picked out everything we were interested in and came up with over 20, which we had to readjust for money/ scheduling purposes.
Great variety of topical subjects.
Great variety, I liked the film makers talk back.
Greatest 10 days of the year.
Have a friend that is the producer of 2 films!
Having the venues all within walking distance and downtown--very great. good selection of diverse docs.
How they came about filmmakers, the films.
Humanism compassion.
I always love that there are many filmmakers present, the friendliness of the staff and community and the great networking time. I really love the pitch sessions too!
I enjoy volunteering a lot being a part of a very cool event in our community!
I like the diversity of films and a mix of short and longer films. I especially like the shorts blocks.
I like the variety and quality of the movies
I liked that the movies I was seeing were new to me, and somewhat "underground". I liked all of the effort put into these films by the creators of each film, because each film was great.
I liked that you incorporated trailers for the movies. It made it much easier to decide on what films to see.
I liked the variety of films. Some were good some not so good but the variety and subject matter was excellent.
I love how the festival takes over downtown Missoula - so many fun venues to visit and the cohesion of one big event it still apparent. It seems local businesses have embraced the festival and what it means as a cultural event for Missoula. Plus I get to see and speak so many filmmakers, it's always a delight to have that access.
I love it all
I love most of it, that's why I come. Zero waste efforts were cool.
I love the festival! It's an annual event that my family and friends look forward to. Docs rock!

I love the films! I also love working with the filmmakers. Welcoming them to our town, showing them around, helping them feel comfortable and get where they need to go. I also like the group of people working to make it all happen.
I love the people. People make the festival great. The hard work, the sweat, the stress that nobody in the audience sees so that that they can have an enjoyable experience...it is why I love to be a part of BSDFF!
I love the Q and A's. I love learning more about current issues and I feel more connected to and passionate about different issues. I hope they can bring change.
I love the variety of films available to see.
I love the variety. The Wilma was an amazing venue.
I loved the diversity of films and the post-documentary Q and A's.
I loved the grandeur of the Wilma. I loved the intimacy of the Top Hat. I love the small town atmosphere and the towns people. Most of all your staff and volunteers were amazing!!!!
I loved the location, the friendliness of the people, and the focus on environmental and local films.
I loved the variety of films. I also really appreciated the work that the festival does with youth in schools. Sarah was organized and efficient and made a point of bringing as many relevant films and filmmakers into the classrooms as she could. MIS had a very rich week because of her hard work coordinating.
I saw some great films.
I work for The Zootown Art's Community Center. I loved working with Gita on the Art Activism Show / Kick off Party for the BSDFF. The show was very well received. The Wilma is beautiful and comfortable and the doc shops were AMAZING. I enjoyed going to The Wilma, The Holiday Inn and The University. What a great turnout! I loved seeing the classes file in at the Doc pitch event. I wasn't able to attend any parties because I was fighting a cold and I wanted to wake up early so I could watch some films, lots and lots of films. Thank you so much for putting on this wonderful event. I can't wait until next year.
I'm happy you've kept the All-Screening pass at \$125 before Jan. 1. Please do not raise that price. Also, please continue to let only pass holders use the balcony. Those new folding chairs on the ground floor are HORRIBLE. Even the Wilma's old seats were better. The Wilma remodel is beautiful, of course, in terms of the décor. But it is no longer a dedicated movie house. As mentioned, those folding chairs are HORRIBLE. No way I could pull an 8-hour "shift" there as I did in past years. The pitch of the floor is not steep--like it used to be--so you dodge heads to see films. There is no projection room anymore, so the projection equipment sitting in the middle of the theater is awful. And if you sit on the sides, those two huge speakers that flank the screen obstruct part of the screen. And not having the second theater is not great either. I never attended any films at Shakespeare & Co., for example. I've hosted events there and attended events there and that place is AWFUL for anything except buying books. I also don't like that the refreshment stand is now INSIDE the theater. No, I actually do not care to constantly smell popcorn or hear people mulling around back there. Very annoying. And I do not like that you cannot exit the theater through the lobby. I like being able to watch part of a film and be able to duck out to catch one at say the Chrystal and not have everyone in the theater know I'm leaving! Let alone the noise of using that side door. And the theater is NOT dark enough. My god, why don't they turn out all the lights like they used to?! So, I'm not happy at all with the "new" Wilma. I can honestly say this: If the pass increases in price and the balcony is no longer available to just pass holders, I will definitely stop attending. And this has nothing to do with the BSFF, the films or any of that. I just think the main venue sucks now. The Chrystal has always sucked. The Roxy is better, of course. And the Top Hat is fine because you do a good job of selecting films that are appropriate for that venue. So, no real complaints there at all. But the Wilma . . . disappointing. It's NOT the same. That is for sure.
Interesting
It was a nice, close-knit community.
It's a film festival!
It's a great community event, opportunity to see quality docs and interact with other filmmakers (it's such a great rep as a filmmakers festivals)
It's a truly wonderful community event and clearly one of the best weeks to showcase this town in the middle of what usually is a slow and dreary time of year.
It's Awesome to see the talent
It's awesome!
It's in town, I ca have a great "stay-vacation".
It's my kind of thing.
It's one of the best run, best moderated festivals going.



I've always liked it.
Local film producer.
Location and quality of the films.
Location, people, venues, and most importantly the fact that it draws people from the professional doc industry. DocShop is amazing. Thank you Jona!
Lots of venues and opportunities
Love all the films and love helping out, being a small part of it.
Love documentaries.
Love it. Gita rules!
Love the variety of films
Love the whole event
Love this event!
Loved how embraced it was by the town. The workshops were really interesting, but many panelists didn't show up so that was disappointing
Loved the friendliness of the people, location is different
Many blocks of short films. Variety. Lots of music films. Top Hat venue. Almost everything started exactly on time! The "will call" option for Pass Holders going to a smaller venue.
Mike Steinberg's input from past.
Mike Steinberg's input from past.
Missoula itself. Volunteers. Films
Montana films.
More diverse film times (but way better this year than in the past).
Most everything.
Mountains and movies... what's not to like
Multiple venues, variety of films, events
Nice selections of films- great job there! Super nice volunteers.
Nice variety- usually we attend several- this is an odd year for us.
Numerous films with very interesting topics in awesome venues among the best people. Can't beat that!
Opportunity to see so many films that otherwise I probably would not have been exposed.
Organization and marketing
Out of three years I think this is the best one.
Panel discussions, contacts
People friendly; nice events and venues
People, films, lectures, organization and fantastic spirit
Probably the most thoughtfully-programmed shorts blocks that I have seen on the festival circuit so far. Great filmmaker events each night. Loved getting the chance to show our film in so many local schools, especially in more rural areas (MAPS was awesome).
Proximity of hotel to venues, awesome community, friendly welcoming locals.
Q & A after the screening and world premiere.
Quality film programming
Quality of films this year. More full length films
Quality of films, buzz on the street.
Quality of films.
Quality of films. Accessibility of filmmakers and pleasant staff.
Quality of the films, retrospective of Lucy Walker, the parties for the filmmakers
Run by the best people, great films, and really great after parties where you can hear people talking!
School house documentaries for kids.
Selection of films is wonderful
So many good movies.

So well organised and so friendly. Missoula is so beautiful!!!
Super friendly and welcoming festival staff, loved that I got a chance to visit Montana, loved Missoula, loved the venue, inspiring films, great activities and events in addition to the films themselves. Great food in Missoula that I very much enjoyed. (Maybe in future you can point people towards things like great coffee and breakfast burritos to go at Market on Front. Don't miss breakfast at Catalyst and that cool place near The Crystal. Ice cream at... Dinner at Red Rooster, Scotty's etc.) Loved the Lucy Walker retrospective. The virtual reality thing was super inspiring. Parties were great, too. Liked that they were each at a different venue in town. Was lovely that I got a chance to visit Yellowstone after the festival. That the festival is in Montana is an undeniable extra draw/perk.
Thank you Missoula!
That festival is a documentary festival
That it's in Missoula!
The ability to see large amount of interesting, world class films in one area.
The awesome films.
The best ever - Organization, people traffic flow, ID checks get a plus and I hope more people bought tickets because of that. Friendly staff. Volunteers were terrific.
The community between filmmakers and the fact that there were so many great films!
The community feeling and atmosphere.
The diversity of stories and people represented in these films is important to me. It's refreshing to learn and connect with different perspectives and cultures.
the diversity of the films
the diversity, friendly people. Felt very welcome!!!!
The docs on Sam Bush and the HBO DOC ON Mavis Staples
The energy, the creativity, the well-told stories of all kinds
The environmental films
The fantastic diversity of wonderful films, the venues, the Bayern Pilsner on tap at the Wilma, the Q and A sessions, the comfy seats upstairs at the Wilma, the Wilma sound-system, the handy-dandy guides...
The film and workshops.
The films and content covered- always great info and variety
The films and the people.
The films are fantastic! We love the short docs the most!
The films especially the shorts.
The films I saw were excellent and started on time. I was only able to see four films but was intrigued by many more and will seek them out.
The films, the staff is helpful. Great to have people from all over.
The films.
The films. The staff. Particularly Gita, Michael Workman, Nick Davis.. All were super helpful and responsive.
The freedom of film options. Not to mention the incredible stories you see and learn about.
The great variety of films subject matter.
The Health Core film with "Will" (short films at 12pm sunday 2/28/16)
The huge variety of well done films.
The kind of people. The film about my "cocesia" by another "cocesia".
The live performances (not so much this year, but I love this component)
The movie hasn't started yet, but doing this survey has been a real pleasure.
The movies were great - lots of diversity, lots of choices
The movies were great and locations were very accessible. It was nice to have a variety of locations.
The nexus.
The number and variety of films, especially the music ones.
The parties were fun, the staff was always nice (except for one overbearing theater staff member who got unnecessarily irritated at an elderly volunteer), it's a quiet & friendly town, filmmakers were fun to talk to, and I liked that it went green this year. I like my cup. The program art was also beautiful.

The people behind BSDFF are super stars! Everyone was extremely friendly and helpful, but more importantly REALLY GOOD at their job. Loved that the goal was to be waste free, and the filmmaker socials were really lovely. I hope I can come back next year!
The people, the programming.
The people. The staff and volunteers were warm, friendly and dedicated. Many have been doing this for years! There were also many opportunities to meet and get to know other filmmakers and community members. Also love the movement towards zero waste. Having a filmmakers lounge was nice.
The quality of films selected.
The quality of the films and the availability of the filmmakers. Friendliness
The quality of the films and the engaged audience. The volunteers and event staff are fantastic and it is obvious that they are all happy to be a part of the event.
The quality of the films and the Q & As after films. Also, you guys have GREAT volunteers
The quality of the movies and the q and a after
The selection of films
The selection of films and topics
The staff was very friendly and we were treated well and there was lots to do.
The theme.
The variety and quality are excellent.
The variety and quality of the films.
The variety of film.
The Variety of film.
The variety of films and opportunities to hear from the filmmakers and actors; the various locations.
the variety of films and the quality of them, and the number of directors there to talk to. There were only 2 out of the 31 that I did not enjoy.
The variety of films and the quality. Also having so many directors there
The variety of films and topics
The variety of films in terms of subject matter
The variety of films.
The variety of films.
The variety of films. The Wilma. That's it's a big deal in missoula
The variety of quality
the variety of strands of films and the Q & A sessions; excellent projection and sound; comfortable venues; passholder only seating in Wilma balcony
The variety of venues which all have very different personalities. The wide programming so there were so many films to see at any one time. The website was well organized with access to film descriptions, trailers and schedules. Love that all the venues are downtown in walking distance of each other. Parties also had great variety.
The Venues! The selection of films! The "vibe"...
The wide variety of topics that were represented
The Wild Short on Saturday at 4:45
The Wilma Theatre and proximity of theaters to walk to.
The Wilma was a great location.
The world comes to Missoula. What an incredible opportunity to learn from the films and then to join in conversations about them all around town for the next month.
There is always an incredible number of documentaries to choose from.
There was a great variety of films and evening activities. The staff was very helpful and organized. This is A LOT of work and everyone involved did a great job.
There was a variety of films all portraying a different matter
This is one of my favorite film festivals! The Wilma is such a great venue, and the entire event is always well organized. I love the broad selection of topics covered and i'm always impressed with the quality of the films. In the past, I have really enjoyed the parties and panels as well. (This year, I was only able to come for closing weekend, so I focused more on seeing films.)

Too much to list. Lovely week. Amazing talent.
Topics, variety of films
Tourists.
Unusual, local opportunity to see documentaries.
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety
Variety and culture
Variety and quality of films
Variety- diversity.
Variety of docs, venues
Variety of films
Variety of films and accessibility.
Variety of films and activities, seeing life through other lenses, learning about things I never knew I wanted to learn about. Reducing single use is good, can go a lot further with this initiative.
Variety of films and length of films. Fun events, friendliness of everyone
Variety of films and topics, talent and knowledge that is represented
Variety of films- good social message.
Variety of films!
Variety of films, quality of films, accessibility of film makers, Q&As after films, BSDFF trailer, website, program, accessibility of staff, local feel yet very well-run, good venues in close proximity to each other, overall energy of festival is so wonderful . . . .
Variety of films, reasonable cost.
Variety of films.
Variety of films.
Variety of films.
Variety of films.
Variety of great subjects!
Variety of movies
Variety of movies, many screenings.
Variety of subjects
Variety of the films and their quality.
Variety of topics
Variety, community event, downtown venues
Variety, diversity.
Variety, education.
Variety, many shorts and lots of music.
Variety.
Variety.
Variety. Events at Bar and Concert Hall type venues in addition to theaters
Variety. Lunch films
variety of films
Venue options, films variety

Venues, parties, films
Very helpful and courteous staff, fun parties, great films
Warm people. Love the high school program
Well Organized, good mix of films, good films.
Well organized. All within walking distance. Docfest very good information contacts.
Wilma opening night film, Mavis, with talk back afterwards w Director. Same with Sunday's film, Bill Evans. Cost of passes are reasonable.
Wonderful films, fabulous activities, engaged community.
Wonderful variety.
Wow, so many great films and so love the Doc Workshop as well. Talking to the film makers is great. Also the website was terrific-easy to use and so good on navigation. Thanks
Yes
Young talent in action. I liked the producers being available for questions and answers

**Q27. Please tell us what you did not like about the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.**

\$6.00 beers at the Wilma. Pickle didn't win an award!
\$8 per film seems high, unless combine to 1 1/2 to 2 hours of films
(1) The box office is my biggest complaint. It moved without warning from the Wilma. There were no hours or location posted on the website or program guide. Upon arrival at the Wilma to pickup my pass, the doors were locked. Visiting again later in the day, the theater staff had no idea what I was talking about when I said I was looking for the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival box office. Eventually someone picked up the phone at the Big Sky website's phone number (no hours posted for the phone line either) and told me to go to the Roxy instead. (2) This survey didn't allow options other than Male/Female. (3) Updates and changes were generally confusing. The hours for the bonfire party were written incorrectly on my badge, so I missed most of it. I didn't know there was a shuttle up there either, until we got there. (4) Signage could be improved for box office but also for Doc Shop & the filmmaker lounge - I felt like I was sneaking around the hotel lobby to find the right room, and one of the Doc Shop workshops was cancelled, but there were no signs about it. I only found out it was cancelled because of some other filmmakers talking nearby. (5) The map in the program guide didn't have any addresses and was generally unhelpful, although it was cute. There was no way to search google maps for the address of the university's theater. Maybe unnecessary for locals, but addresses are needed for visitors. I missed a Doc Shop workshop because of this. There was also zero parking nearby the university, so I circled hoping to find a place just to hop out and ask someone where the theater was, then gave up after 15 minutes trying to find unrestricted parking. (6) Parties and events weren't on the website or in the program guide. I wanted to plan ahead for these but assumed there were none. (7) The audio at Wilma wasn't ideal- pretty echo-y. A huge space like that could use more paneling or curtains on the walls. The speakers also obstruct the view of the screen if you're sitting on the side.
A friend thinks they should get priority seating for full pass.
A positive- too much to choose from
A seeming deficit in organization. Some details were not addressed in a comprehensive or timely/efficient manner due to this lack.
Accessibility of tickets at opening night/communication with the crowd. Opening night film "minimalists" seems inaccessible to Missoula/median income was not the right demographic
All good
All good.
Although I understand the importance of making sure that a person is using only their own pass, it was a hassle to show my ID each time I entered the theater. Would it be possible to have photos printed on the passes instead?
As a punch pass holder, I wish I had earlier entry over regular ticket holders. The Q&As got out of hand sometimes (Skips Stones For Fudge)
Attitude of Wilma owner.
Availability of seating at smaller venues
being turned away due to lack of seating, though I understand it is hard to guess which films will need bigger

venues
Can't quite put my finger on it - maybe it feels less personal now than it has in the past.
Can't see them all..
Can't think of anything
Can't think of anything.
Concessions. Lines for popcorn and drinks was ridiculous and unbelievably slow at the Wilma. Behind 6 people but waited 26 minutes because the popcorn machine only popped 3-4 bags worth of popcorn at a time.
confusion about priority seating at the small venues; lack of grab 'n go healthy food (not popcorn and candy) at or near venues (if you can have a full bar in a theater, can't you have pre-made sandwiches?) Or hire one of Missoula's food trucks to be on the street near theater.
Confusion is purchasing tickets.
Cost of all inclusive pass is high.
Couldn't see everything I wanted to!
Crystal sound. Choice of event to attendance ratio.
Crystal theater was too small, was shut out of Lucy Walker retrospective on Feb. 20th.
Crystal too cold, not comfortable chairs
Cups, if I go to event I expect a cup even if written in the flyer.
did not like being solicited to join the Documentary streaming company (like Netflix) at both the Crystal and Wilma locations
everything was fine
everything was great
Felt I could have had better directions on how to get where and the timing, etc of events. I was confused about how to get to the pitch workshop (wasn't sure about the bus) and had to figure out that walking probably made most sense, wasn't sure how to get to the theater and then didn't realize there was a lunch break -- so I could have been seeing a film during that time instead. (Always try to pack my schedule to the brim! ;)
Film maker present after film.
Film showings on weekdays during work hours (9-5).
Film topics were disappointing this year.
Films at 9:15pm not early enough.
For one event/venue, I was close to not being allowed to enter because I had a punch card rather than an All Access pass or single event ticket. Though I traveled from Stevensville, arrived 30 minutes early, and was #5 in line, the staff allowed All Access, and single ticket holders in ahead of us, even folks that were just pulling up, or at the end of the line. Fortunately, I was one of the last let in. I think this seating procedure is patently unfair to those who have planned ahead, traveled from out of town, and have waited patiently in line.
Glitching of last film.
Hard to choose what to attend! An abundance of wonderful films. :-)
Hard to plan schedule until I got the booklet.
How crowded it can get.
How far it is from NY
I could not find directions to the party at the ski resort out of town (Marshall Mountain) - I was driving myself, and google maps had it almost 2 hours away (incorrectly). I spent 30 minutes trying to figure out which lot to park in at the University Center, making me late for my pitch at DocShop. (Luckily they started thirty minutes late)
I couldn't catch all the programs I wanted to.
I didn't have enough time to see more
I don't particularly like Q & A's, but I understand the need for them.
I feel like more repeat screenings would be lovely.
I like everything about the festival and only have a couple of small suggestions to improve it.
I only saw 11 feature films this year which is ten less than last year. I don't have any real complaints.
I think a fiction film fest would also be great
I thought that most of the shorts could be grouped better so more similar films were together

I was disappointed with the Montana strand for the 1st time.
I wish that it was more than just documentaries.
I wish the photos were printed on the passes rather than showing ID. I do respect your efforts to minimize pass "sharing." Need coffee at the Wilma.
I wish the programming during the week was a bit more diverse.
I wish there were more showtimes of some specific docs.
I'd like a little more from the Filmmaker lounge.
If I had to make one suggestion (and really this didn't bother me much) it was that the screenings often didn't end/start on time. The only other thing is that during the shorts screening in the main theatre, when people would leave out of the side doors, that was fairly distracting. But overall, these were small things and I absolutely loved your festival!
It gets a little too 'Missoula' sometimes, but that's not necessarily a bad thing, I suppose
It is really nice to be in a theater- not the Bookstore. Roxy is cool
It is unconscionable that someone chose a completely inaccessible venue for ANY event, much less the awards night!!! Do NOT use The Loft again !!!! Good lord! Did no one even think if all of the folks using wheelchairs and canes?! Please train box office folks more. Especially the person who, on opening day, will be tending the passes/punchcard booth.
It starts to get pretty pricey.
It was all wonderful!
It wasn't so much the festival, it's just that the wifi at my hotel was spotty which made some work that I had to do harder to get done.
It would have been nice to have a bit more of a filmmaker's lounge, where things were going on, breakfast was served etc. to bring us together outside of the parties. Also, it was cool to be able to see a film in the Top Hat for me, but my film didn't screen there. I think I might have been a little frustrated to have work screen in that venue since it wasn't the best sound/visual set-up
Just a couple of sound issues! There was one very echoey day in the Crystal.
Just got here, ask me in a couple days
Lack of diversity. Disorganization of non-film programming and lack of information provided to speakers in advance. Disposition of staff towards invited guests - speakers, panel members, jury, etc.
Late night showings.
Late starts and long lines.
Like it all
Line for tickets.
Lines
long lines, crowded
Long wait in the lobby
Lots of confusion over where certain special events were, and how to find the events on the UC campus
Loved everything. Wouldn't say I "didn't like" anything.
maybe too many films, might want to high grade then a bit.
maybe too many films...tough to see all that one wanted to see
Missing some.
More chances to meet with fellow filmmakers.
More showtimes
Most of the films I was interested in were at the Crystal & I thought the venue was too small. At one of the shorts series, over 40 people had to be turned away, and I was turned away from another film the next day for lack of seating. Would love to have seen more films at the Roxy.
Most of the films were saddening and depressing
Movie started late due to A&A before. We're paying a babysitter so time is of the essence!
Multiple showings diluted the crowd size which probably did not benefit the venues, particularly the Wilma and the Top Hat. There were likely too many venues as well
N/A
NA

NA
Need more slots for "Films you missed" because several I wanted to see were sold out or conflicted with others I really wanted to see; maybe slightly fewer choices, with more of the feature films screening more than once; wish you had a senior price for 5-punch passes because I like the convenience of buying the passes ahead of time, but it was more cost-effective for me to buy single screening tickets as a senior.
Needed more notice regarding the zero waste concept, or many more reminders! :).
No app for mobile with schedule of films. Integrate to google calendar.
no complaints.
No complaints.
No continental breakfast at the hotel.
No food/drink for screenings at the Crystal.
No popcorn at the Crystal.
No problems come to mind.
No refillable popcorn bag at the Wilma.
None
Not enough diversity in the workshops
Not enough room at smaller venues.
Not enough theaters utilized (i.e., other areas of town, for example, church theaters)
Not enough thought leaders presenting
Not starting on time.
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing so far!
Nothing so far.
Nothing!
Nothing.
Nothing.
Nothing. It's great!
Often time the movies were running behind schedule.
one of the Doc Shops was cancelled and I didn't know until I got there. it happens, but it would have been nice to have been notified
Online ticketing- very expensive and hard to access will call. Hard to read subtitles.
Overall not much to not like- just keep refining programming.
Overlapping schedule with parts and events.
Parking downtown.
People need to be moved in and out more on time.
Pre-buying a single ticket didn't ensure you could get into that film if you didn't arrive before theater filled up



Price. Would like to see a 3 film ticket / discounted price
Put rasta funk music at the last evening time films put all music films at last evening time.
Reading subtitles over heads. Some sound effects were jolting
Restrooms out of order.
Roxy has too small of a screen.
Rude people talking during the films.
Rude people who talk during the films.
Runs late.
Scheduling issues.
See Q26.
Seeing more than a few gets expensive
Sessions start late, some 15 minutes late so you can't be on time in for the next one if it's in a different theater. Some staff were nice, some were pretentious. The arrogance of a couple of staff members. Being asked to show ID to use the pass you paid for is offensive and bothersome. Missed several shows at the crystal because they were full. Starting late and not even caring about being late is disrespectful. I may not come back next year- this year has really put me off.
Shakespeare & Co party was too cramped.
Shakespeare venue too small -- many of us turned away Friday night.
shorts were often very disparate from each other and it would have made more sense to me if they were somewhat similar in subject so I could get to more of them.
Signage and events should be all over Missoula during the festival. Even some locals I spoke with does not know this festival takes place each year - and they should. Flags, banners, signage should takeover Missoula during the festival.
Single tickets- selling tickets to be improved.
Single use at the venues. Q&A sessions were painful at times...long, not the best questions, people walking out...which is their right but awkward.
Some Box Office staff needs more training/info
Some box office staff weren't trained or knowledgeable. Pass people should have their own line to pick up those passes.
Some of the films I wanted to see were a t times when others I wanted to see were showing
Some of the movies I wanted to see started too late for me to be able to go on a weekday.
Some of the staff introductions were pretty mediocre. Some of the introducers seemed to have axes to grind with the owners of the Festival venues and used the time meant to be introducing films or filmmakers expressing their anger toward them.
Some of the venues were small so people had to be turned away. Seating at some venues was uncomfortable for long periods of viewing. (Shakespeare and Co. and the Crystal)
Some of the venues were too small to accommodate demand.
Some volunteers seem untrained
Sometimes difficult to see the popular films (capacity).
Sorry to miss some films held earlier in the week when we can't be here for all.
Sound at the Roxy is still "iffy" for me. Even with hearing aids, I miss words. Wish the Roxy even had regular showings with "closed captioning" turned on.
Sound was a bit buggy at the Crystal for the first few days, but better by midweek.
Standing in lobby of wilma before the film.
technical difficulties (sound, etc) at the Crystal.
That I cannot see them all.
The accessibility of the Wilma- less access than prior
The crowds!
The Crystal Theater is to small. The popcorn at the Wilma is yuccy. I would like to see more local films.
The Doc Shop location at the UC theater.
The expense of the all pass.

The festival seems too long and too full. Several films were only screened early in the festival and not rescreened.
The films picked for the awards were definitely NOT the best films there, venues were not big enough, a lot of technical problems, no moderator at the end showed up for Q&A (this happened twice)
The increasingly inflexibility of the organization, I've bought passes for at least 5 years but won't be again. The friends we used to come with got fed up and don't come now and we're about there too. I was satisfied with the event staff except for one guy. No hot drinks like tea or coffee. Ex. showing is not entering the lobby, not entering mid showing.
The lack of panelists.
The line outside the Wilma on opening night was very disorganized.
The low numbers of films mid week.
The method of buying tickets is ridiculous waiting in the cold- no fun.
The Minimalists was a poor choice for a prime slot on the first Sat. nite. It made me wonder if the festival's standards were slipping. Was it just because it showed Missoula? "Skips Stones for Fudge," for example, was a much better Missoula-related movie. "Minimalists" was indulgent and seemingly clueless about class, gender, race, and poverty.
The new way the flow works at The Wilma is awful. I have purchased an all screening pass for years and am seriously considering not getting one anymore. A huge part of the worth of the all screening pass is being able to duck in and out of the balcony at will, not standing in line for everything I might be interested in. Additionally , not letting pass holders use the exit in the balcony is silly. It's the most effective way to get out of the theatre without stirring up attention. If you're going to use a volunteer to prohibit exit, why not use them to check passes and make it an entrance and an exit to the balcony? I cannot emphasize enough, how much you are devaluing the pass purchase, by locking down the entrance and egress to the theatre. There is almost no advantage to having a pass if your, free access and stealthy exit, at any time is restricted. I am not alone in this, I spoke with other, long time pass holders who feel the same and might not be buying them anymore.
The online ticketing didn't work, communication about where to buy tickets was terrible. I was told to buy tickets at the Wilma, the Wilma sent me to the Roxy, the Roxy sent me to the book store, the film was sold out. I went to the Top Hat to buy tickets, they sent me to the Wilma. No one really knew what was going on when I asked staff where to buy tickets for which show....it seemed very disorganized this year compared to years past.
The popcorn at the Wilma. The "woodfire" film being lumped together with films I had already seen. It should have been at bigger venue.
The 'reserve a spot for passholders" didn't work, Crystal folks seemed cranky and let ticket holders in before pass holders even when we arrived early, inconsistency with when you could or could not enter the theatre at the Wilma.
The sound system at the Crystal - there was a buzzing that detracted from the sounds in the films (at least on the first Saturday).
The venue for Doc Shop at the U of M was difficult to find. And because it was relatively far away, the attendance for the first few days was low. Also, because Doc Shop events in the program booklet are listed separately from the schedule of films, many people did not know about Doc Shop or were confused about it.
The Wilma needs to start serving coffee! And it would be nice if each of the movies showed more than once; I missed several because they only showed at a time I was not available.
The Wilma showtimes were all over the place. I saw 3 films there and was never sure when to arrive. When I was on time the film started almost 30 minutes late and since it was the last film of the night the Q&A didn't end until after 11pm. When I was 5 minutes late I walked into the end of the first short. The screenings I attended at The Crystal and Shakespeare both went fine. The new Wilma is beautiful and the sound is great, but it's a tough experience for a film viewing. If anyone sits in front of you it is impossible to see the whole screen and there's hardly any way to sneak into the back if you arrive late.
there was a minor glitch in one of the films we went to where they couldn't play the film. We just opted to see another one.
They do not sell coffee as a beverage at the Wilma Theater, and I do not drink alcohol. I also do not drink much soda.
This is not a criticism of the festival, but I found myself feeling "overfull", overloaded, too many stories taken in in such a short span of time, leading to an unpleasant sort of mental/emotional indigestion.
Too hard to get to all the films I wanted to see.
Too many films"left on purpose" not right for this festival.
Too many films"left on purpose" not right for this festival.

Too many good choices that conflict
Too many movies in the middle of work day
Trouble getting from one film to the next because of time constraints
Turned away from small venues.
Unable to accommodate ticket holders when back to back events are at same venue
Unavailable bathrooms at the Wilma... Again!! Wish movies would start on time.
Unfortunately, the Crystal was too small for Friday night's Shorts. Too many people were turned away. That group of shorts should have been screen twice, and with the overflow crowd Friday, I think you could have rescreened that group immediately after the first screening.
Venue manager at Crystal did not recognize first-come, first-serve in line for crowded show. He seemed to panic.
Volunteers have been great, could use more way finding help between venues.
Water! Parking awful (Crystal)
We weren't very impressed this year with the selection of Shorts to be honest. Simply felt there were only 1-2 compelling or interesting films in each block and the majority were very uninspiring.
Went to Russian woodpecker and sold out
What I didn't like about it was the lack of coordination between the website and venues about availability of tickets. I tried numerous times to get a punch card ahead of time due to travel and found it impossible. Where they were supposed to be available (Wilma box office) it was closed when it was supposed to be open. None of the other venues had them. Even the main office which the other venues sent me to didn't have them. Hard to promote a festival if you can't make tickets available and convenient. Typical Missoula event.
When people attend films at the Wilma where a filmmaker or others associated with the film, the audience should be required to stay for this vital segment. When you open the south side exit door, a blast of cold air is extremely unpleasant.
Wilma is not wheelchair accessible in all areas
Wilma on opening night- crowd control and communication out front
Wilma organization.
Wish this year it had been earlier - bumped into several other activities
You & Me- what happened? No room left at the Saturday viewing.

**Q28. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?**

A clear place to buy tickets for particular shows....more communication between volunteers/staff as to what is going on....or even just selling tickets at the venue where the film is played would make more sense!
A food cart outside of the Wilma? Or two? Also, the BSDFF website is great, but it sure would be nice if one could click on a screening and automatically add it to one's personal google calendar.
A list of films after the event...where or how they can be seen if you missed them during the festival
Actually, maybe fewer films would help people make decisions on which films they would most like to see. The schedule seems a bit overwhelming as it is now...
Advertise online ticket sales
All good.
Allowing punch pass attendees to stay in the theater if we are staying in the same location for two films in a row.
anything added would help but try to keep everything in place of working order
At the Wilma- making people leave out of the side door was uncomfortable for them and disruptive. There are three main door channels at The Wilma, keep the center one for exiting folks.
Audience award! Send out an email each evening to the filmmakers reminding them what is going on the next day.
Bad concessions at Wilma- people are rude with talking and constantly checking cell phones! Big log jam on stairs. They block traffic flow- and the more they drink the louder they get.

Before the film you should announce the length of the film, and if the filmmakers will be there - who is attending the q&a so I know if I should run to my next movie or stay after the credits. The Crystal didn't have any concessions - I wanted a tea/coffee and didn't know beforehand. I was watching a 3 hour movie there so that would have been good to know!
Better concessions available. Better communication from staff to viewers in line at smaller venues when theater is at or nearing capacity.
Better organization- people were getting in for free because no one was punching passes.
Better parking
Better popcorn at The Wilma- spices! Like at the Roxy.
Better schedule- (big picture) in the book. The one online is much better.
Better scheduling- either making Q+A's shorter or just schedule more time.
Better sound at Crystal (very cracky).
Better topics
Better website layout, i.e., sort by category
Bring it back.
BSDFF needs to figure out how to get folks in and especially out of the theaters in a more efficient and fair manner. A few minutes should be devoted to some volunteer groups to do a real quick "sweep through" of the aisles to pick up trash. I'm aware you guys are discussing these issues because at the Wilma in particular no doubt hundreds of folks simply remain in their seats and do not re-enter; thus losing revenue I would think. On a couple of occasions, ED and event host owner/staff were overheard "discussing" their unhappiness and dissatisfaction with certain logistical challenges. In the future, I would kindly suggest you guys be very careful how, when and where you have these conversations. As my mother always told me....."the walls have ears"!
Can't think of any. So impressed!
Cheaper tickets.
Child friendly ratings
Concentrate the attendance so that the venues are comfortably full. An empty room is sometimes worse than having too many people. I do not see the benefit of repeating films during the work day when evening showings are not drawing crowds. Maybe there could be fewer war/depressing films and more films with hopeful messages.
Continental breakfast at the hotel. (LOL ! )
Could you cross reference page number of description along with alphabetized list.
Crowdsource one of the doc picks.
Distribute to PBS and school systems- kids can educate their parents, mass exposure is essential for change
Doc Shop films were not listed with the other films so lots of people missed them. Better advertisement for those films and discussions in the list of films.
fewer films
Fine as it, interested to see how it will grow.
First time I've attended. As I return over the next few years I may have some suggestions.
Five ticket punch card for seniors.
Folks exiting out the side door of the Wilma during films creates a big distraction when light enters the space.
For programs under 90 minutes add a short.
Freebies, more local films.
Gift Certificates available at Christmas. 5 punch, 10 punch, etc. Good stocking stuffers!
Give a rating to the films with violence towards animals or other upsetting images/themes so that parents can be more informed before taking extra sensitive kids. I thought this was done in the past, but I might be recalling another festival, maybe Wildlife Film Festival? It helps a lot when choosing.
Good so far.
Hard one! Perhaps have a day on a weekend when you do a lot of reruns that don't show at the same time as others shown before.

Hard to improve upon
Hire experienced staff and volunteers.
How about a 5 pass punch card for seniors or make it that buying 2 punch card is a deal for seniors instead of individual tickets.
I did not use the will call feature for pass holders this year - but I am happy that it is an option. To take that one step further, it would be nice to be able to sign up for films online, rather than signing up for will call at the box office.
I don't remember if this was available on the website, but indicating next to each film the dates and times it might be offered? Maybe each one is shown only once, with winners being shown more than once, but I was sad not to see some of them....hard to choose.
I found some of the volunteers somewhat rude when they carded me as a pass holder, and one time when I (heaven forbid) came in the wrong door as a pass holder, when I had come through that door to every screening so far that week. I get that you need to check IDs (though it saddens me) but asking for IDs was inconsistent and so was the expectation of using the other door (in fact it was locked the first time I tried it). I don't want to feel grumpy as I arrive at the films! better training perhaps?
I preferred the festival starting a week earlier so I could attend films all day on President's Day.
I think BSDFF has the potential to grow into a major industry event - filmmakers love to come, the experience is amazing, but the festival sacrifices cache by taking place right between other major festivals. If the fest were to take place later in the year outside the influence of competing festivals it may be able to take the programming to a new level and attract more industry press and influencers. There's definitely room for BSDFF to carve a niche similar to Hot Docs or SXSW, but not in February.
I think it should be a week long with another screen ( perhaps at the Roxy) so yiu can see more. I would prefer the event to end earlier ( 5 pm) if held Oscar night. Docs are also honored at the Oscars and I do like to catch it as I enjoy all film.
I think it would be great to have an interactive place (facebook page?) where people could vote.
I think the Festival may benefit from showing fewer films, but showing those films more often. Though every film I saw started on time, I heard from a number of friends that the films they saw started late. While it's understood that Missoulians have a lax attitude toward punctuality, if you warn them in the program and promotional materials that films will start at exact times, I think they'll make sure not to be late.
I want more international topics.
I wish the parties with food available would tell you whether or not there are just snacks or full meals. Also, a system that allows the filmmakers to easily share their work with one another could be cool. I have ideas about this.
I would love to see some sort of dinner-and-a-movie option for the bigger feature films.
If you're going to have a film shown during weekday work hours, show it again one evening.
I'll be back
I'll email ya later. I volunteer to proofread material ( 33 years as an editor).
In the program guide: Addresses for theaters, locations & hours for box office, number & hours for info via phone. On the website or in emails to filmmakers: parties & events list. General: Information to filmmakers could be sent earlier. While the day-of emails from Gita were helpful, they were often sent too late to accommodate changes.
In the program on the lists of films, by the day indicate films that are shone more than one time.
It's great! Thank you!
It's just sad that there were so many films I couldn't get to see. There needs to be a national organization that can stream documentaries on demand for fees (could even black out local areas, like during BSDFF, so wouldn't affect attendance that much), like a "Netflix for Documentaries". Fund it initially with a Kickstarter campaign; I'd definitely contribute.
It's minor, but adhering to the scheduled times for film starts is essential. You did a really good job, but there is some room for improvement. I would suggest with filmmaker Q&A that the emcee have a question or two prepped to kick things off. It takes the audience a few minutes to warm up and that time where there are no questions can be awkward for the filmmaker.

jury out some not so good docs
Keep DOC SHOP at the Holiday Inn/Higgins Ave. locations
Keep doing the reusable cups! That was powerful and many commented on how cool that was for them to experience. I would suggest more workshops. Maybe a cash prize for pitching. Just a little to offset the travel.
keep it at 10 days, but screen 10-15% fewer films and have 2 screenings each, including having 2nd time around screenings earlier in the a.m. on weekends AND weekdays; establish and publish coffeehouse venues for post-screening salon style discussions and activist organizing on film's issue
Keep it like it is. It's a gem
Keep on schedule to avoid conflicts. Sell hcs ahead to avoid upsets.
Keep the Wilma schedule a little closer to what's posted. The VR experience at Rocky Mountain School of Photography was amazing and I'd love to see more experiential and immersive documentary experiences.
Keep up the good work!
keep up the great work!
Keep working on programming and find more hidden gem films that can not be found on other circuits.
Larger secondary venues.
Less films at the Crystal, more at the Roxy.
Lighting for Q and A so filmmakers can see who has a question better.
Lineup crowd control and info provided to those in line. More music, food vendors, more venues. Survey of film interest prior to festival so that venues are assigned according to crowd size. Other art exhibits during the festival. Local groups and vendors out.
List DocShop events in the same schedule as films. If a venue takes more than 15 minutes to get to by foot, either arrange guided walks to the venue or shuttle buses. When I got to the University Center (after asking for directions while lost), it was still difficult to find the UC Theater. The one sign that was up was on the second floor stairs inside the building. There needs to be more other signs on the outside of the building too.
Local films at the Wilma!
Make sure that what you are telling the public and what you actually do are the same thing. My experience is that they have not been. I think your attendance would be better for those that like to plan in advance. Unless that isn't your goal which apparently it isn't.
Maybe big signage at each venue reminding folks about the festival going to zero waste , so it's ingrained into folks
Maybe have a food truck night at Caras Park;
Maybe leave a daytime slot open on each of the last two days of the festival, for a third screening of audience favorites. This would mean there would have to be a way of determining audience favorites, of course. But that's something that other film festivals give awards for - so how do they figure it out before the Festival's completely over? I was very disappointed that the standout excellence of certain films didn't trickle down by word of mouth until I had missed both showings. And they don't tend to be films you can call up on Netflix...
Maybe less then 10 days- have about 7.
Maybe not quite so many films. It's very overwhelming.
Mobile app.
More "films you missed" at the end.
More clear directions to each event, communication about the ground rules for the pitch. (The email said we had 8 minutes to present, the first pitcher went on with no time limit, and then it was announced we had 10 minutes to present)... Overall it was a wonderful event, please don't misunderstand. I was impressed by Jona's vetting of a very diverse set of projects for the pitch fest (the only day I attended).
More concessions at the Crystal.
More concessions available. More than popcorn.
More director panel discussions.
More diversity
More documentaries!

More feature films at the Wilma shorts at other venues.
More films by people of color about experiences.
More films from 6-9pm at all theatres.
More flexibility, less arrogance of admin. staff.
More proliferation of and access to non-screening events, like parties and classes.
More room for Timoner Films.
More unusual events
Multiple screenings would let us have a better chance of seeing particular films.
My boyfriend and I bought all-access passes for the closing weekend and rather than receiving regular passes on lanyards, we received wristbands. The wristband itself was fine, but non of the festival volunteers had ever seen one before, so it was more difficult to get into the theater. Every time we went past a new volunteer, we would have to explain what the wristband meant. One particularly vigilant volunteer was very reluctant to let us sit in the balcony with the rest of our party because she didn't believe the wristband was a pass. We didn't go to any parties this year, but I'm fairly certain we would have had trouble there as well. Also, because we didn't receive actual passes, we didn't get an information about the parties and I had to look at my brother's full festival pass for that information. It wasn't a problem for us because we've been coming to the festival for years and we know how it works, but it could be confusing to a first-timer. My only other suggestion is that you figure out a way to tent the side door of the Wilma or allow people to exit through another door during a screening block. During every shorts block we attended, people were exiting during the credits, or sometimes, in the middle of films and when they would open the door, a huge amount of light and cold air would come in. Someone had to sit next to the door to slam it shut every time someone left. And the volunteers were instructed to make everyone exit through the side door, so there was no way to discretely exit out the back.
Nah
Need more comedy films. How about general themes per venue, i.e. comedy in the Roxy, Nature in the Wilma, and Noire at the Shakes. Need hot drinks, tea and coffee as well as free popcorn refills. Also the Roxy needs to be utilized more/ better.
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Need more merchandise (small and medium). Small and medium sold out by Monday night
Next year have a little more variety on the mood of the films
No suggestions. Great job, I will keep coming.
None
None
None
None
None
None
None
None at the moment.
none at this time
None for festival- assure all venues are accessible in all possible seating areas
None- great job!
None I can think of, it was well done! Good luck next year!
None- keep up the good work.
None really, good job!
None!
None, thanks so much! I love the festival

None. You guys did a great job.
None. I thought this was great. Four of the movies I saw were in the Wilma. I thought the entry into the films based on having 5 show passes was great.
None. You folks are doing a great job
Not really, I was very happy. Please get Uber!! :)
Nothing
Nothing
offer concessions at the noon films at the wilma
only bummer with the festival is the amount of films I have to miss due to work schedule.
Parking options.
Perhaps a local Community Center could screen more local films.
Please keep it going - and I loved the parties as well....
Please let us know ahead of time to bring copies of our films so we can screen in the lounge
please see above. Overall I really enjoyed myself! had a great energy!
Popcorn!
Put the address for special events everywhere possible
Reclaim and restore the filmmakers lounge! It totally sucked this year (no offense!); and has in the past been a regular source of comfort, community, and opportunity to catch-up on missed films for the filmmakers. There were not enough snacks on any given day, and less than a dozen DVDs ever. I also think we could do with a filmmaker services bureau, headed by a person or small group that focuses on the aspect of crafting the filmmaker experience alone. The FSB would organize outings, collaborate on events, manage filmmaker amenities, and coordinate the liaison team. Filmmaker experience is a vital part of the festival -- one that already has set us apart from other festivals -- and if and as we cultivate it, we will become even more popular with filmmakers around the world, and an even more coveted festival in the documentary circuit. Let me know if you decide to create a temporary yearly position for head of FSB. I'd gladly apply.
Related to Q27, you need to anticipate movies that will likely have a higher interest, and show these at a larger venue. For example, the film by the Minimalists (Missoula directors) was shown at Shakespeare & Co, when it should have been shown at the Roxy, Crystal, or even Wilma.
Repeat films at more times.
Repeat popular film screenings.
Same as above!
Scheduling of events could be staggered slightly better, felt like I had to choose between things because there wasn't enough time between events - like they were too tightly stacked. I didn't really have as much time as I would have liked to attend the Doc Workshop panels but if there's any room for improvement I would think it would be there. I love the idea of having Doc Workshop panels but wanted the topics to be more helpful for me as a filmmaker than it felt that they were. The topics didn't really grab me. Wanted them to be more like SXSW. (As an example). I found the panels there super helpful and I tend to compare all else to that festival. (Although I understand it's a whole different type of fest).
Scheduling of programs could improve. Timing of huge films would overlap or not allow most access to biggest audience.
See above
See above
See above answer. Also: Please stress to the Crystal Theatre folks that the bathroom should be scrubbed, especially the floors. And smell better. Pretty bad urine-bus-station aroma there. Do not use any venue that is not ADA compliant !!! Sell T-shirts (both styles) in 3X.
See above.
See above. This is such a complex event to pull off as well as you do over a 10-day period, and relies on good coordination and leadership. Among the film makers I spoke to during the event, all said how much they loved the event, Missoula, the people here . . . What a tremendous event this has become! I just love the exposure to so many high quality documentary films.



See Q27.
See Q27. Also, if possible, additional 3D viewers should have been made available at the Rocky Mountain School of Photography. I waited 30 minutes to see the Cuba documentary without success. Never made it back.
Sell coffee cups with the event logo on it
Sell tickets online, allow people to have ticket for next showing to stay.
Sharkpear Theatre needs better seats for the longer shows. Very uncomfortable for more than an hour.
Shorter festival- more at the Roxy if possible for convenience.
Show what you say you're going to show in the schedule.
Shuttles to University events.
Since there's a demand for both festival goers and locals who bought tickets to watch the films, I would suggest larger venues, especially on Friday/Saturday
Snacks beside candy/popcorn at Wilma. Make sure Shakespeare is listed everywhere if it is included next year
So far, none!
SO hard to gauge. I think communication is key though.
Some larger venues, especially on weekends.
Some of the movies that are played more than once are on consecutive days and hard to see them
Stagger the chairs at the Wilma so you aren't directly behind the person in front of you. Had a hard time avoiding tall people obstructing my view at busier screenings.
Stickers to wear.
Student punch passes would be great!
Suggest places online where documentaries can be screened after the festival.
Suggestion - if a film is doing it's world premiere, or has lots of people traveling in from very far away to appear at a screening, prioritize that a photographer is available to cover. We noticed the photographer was going to certain screenings and not others and weren't sure how that was decided.
The doc shop films were not well advertised in the list of films so Waking in oak Creek might have had a better turnout if folks could see it amidst the films as they were choosing the ones to watch. Lots of folks told me they couldn't find it listed and I think did not understand that doc shop was not just for filmmakers.
The location of the event on the online schedule should link directly to directions.
The more films with two showings, the better, as it does get hard to see all the ones one would like to see! Also -- it would be nice to have a \$30 punch pass for seniors -- punch pass convenience overshadowed by its being more for seniors than 5 \$6 tickets.
The system to get a ticket in was pretty slow at times.
This is such a marvelous event for our community! Thank you for bringing such diversity into Missoula. Perhaps next year we could try to reach even more kiddos and extend the school invites to adults in the MIS community.
Totally satisfied
Very pleased.
We have attended several years and love it!
Work on exit/entry at the Crystal as well as start on time.
You all do a fantastic job. Thanks for a great festival.
You do a great job- love it!
You guys do a fantastic job!
You're doing a good job!

