

Film tackles biggest questions about life

What: Screening of 'Journey of the Universe'

Where: Center for the Arts

When: 6:30 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. screening
Thursday

How much: Free

Web: JourneyOfTheUniverse.org

By Amanda H. Miller

There are at least 100 billion galaxies in the universe. There could be a trillion or more, all teeming with complexity.

While rapidly discovering the intricacies light-years away, we are also exploring the layers of life here on Earth.

A new film, "Journey of the Universe," dives into the sea of questions about how our universe came to be, how science has evolved and how human interaction with our environment has come to define life on Earth.

"Journey of the Universe" will be shown Thursday at the Center for the Arts. Admission is free.

The film's producer, Mary Evelyn Tucker, will travel to Jackson to lead a discussion about how the film addresses the biggest and most complicated philosophical and fundamental questions of our universe.

Tucker, a religion and ecology professor at Yale University, co-wrote the film and its accompanying book with Brian Thomas Swimme, a mathematical cosmologist and professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco.

"This film is about making a spiritual connection with the environment," said Steve Duerr, executive director of The Murie Center.

That concept makes Jackson Hole an obvious place to screen the film. The idea of humans forming a spiritual bond with nature resonates here and has for a long time.

Duerr referenced a quote from Olaus Murie, the famed naturalist who settled in the valley in the late 1800s.

"Jackson Hole is more than a valley with a sky-piercing range," Olaus once



COURTESY PHOTO

Mary Evelyn Tucker will discuss her film after Thursday's screening.

said. "It is a country with a spirit."

The Murie Center and the Center of Wonder are co-hosting the event.

"We've tried hard, in our promotions and ads, not to predetermine what people will think," said Jen Simon, project coordinator for the Center of Wonder. "We want people to go in with an open mind and a lot of curiosity."

The film addresses the concept of creativity as a universal, animating force, Simon said.

"That's something that I think most people in Jackson can really relate to," Simon wrote in an email. "One of the things that I think is so unique about this place and the people here is the mix of activity and creativity inherent in how people live their lives — and maybe that's why so many of us choose to live here.

"There is a great blending of art and athletics, for example," she said. "So that's another thing that the film brings that will resonate for locals, that the film is interdisciplinary. It's not just from the perspective of science or religion or ecology or art. It has a deep respect for the complexity of our real lives and doesn't try to dumb anything down."