

## NEWS RELEASE

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## ***Planet Walker's John Francis to Recount Decades of Walking, Silence and a life of Environmental Activism***

### ***College of Marin Hosts Discussion with Local Author***

Kentfield, CA—Nov. 26, 2006—John Francis, an itinerant environmental and peace activist whose 22-year, mostly silent walking pilgrimage across the United States and into South America, is the inspiration for his book, Planetwalker: How to Change Your World One Step at a Time, will be at College of Marin sharing stories about his life's work.

**The event is Dec. 8 at 7-9 p.m. in Olney Hall 96 at College of Marin, 835 College Drive, Kentfield, CA.**

Francis shunned motorized vehicles after witnessing the devastating 1971 oil spill in the San Francisco Bay and spent the next 22 years walking and sailing the globe. During that time he took a vow of silence that lasted 17 years, earned a master's degree in Environmental Science and a doctorate in Land Resources Management. He became a Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations Environment Programme to the World's Grassroots Communities and worked as a policy analyst with the U.S. Coast Guard Oil Pollution Act 1990 staff, assisting in the development and implementation of a natural resource damage assessment methodology and the analysis of federal oil spill regulations.

In 1992, Francis sailed to the Caribbean and worked on environmental problems facing the Antigua. He was appointed to a governmental Beautification Committee. In Brazil, Francis, was the first person granted permission to walk through the Waimiri-Atroari Indian Reservation.

A Philadelphia native who makes his home in Pt. Reyes, Francis describes his journey as largely an inner one in which his ideas about people, geography and environmentalism distilled in a simple philosophy of respect for each other. Universal Studios has bought the rights to make a movie of Francis' story.

“We still need to pass legislation and save pieces of land but along with that, we're going to have to really take a look at ourselves and how we treat each other,” he said recently. “I believe the cause of these environmental problems is we don't treat each other with respect and dignity. It's not just about trees and birds and habitat. It's about human rights, civil rights, and the gender issues we struggle with.”

Francis, 60, retraces sections of his long walk beginning each year in April on Earth Day and walking through May. He expects the conversations with the people he meets, now that he speaks and is working with local organizations, will be different than when he was a silent backpacker. He has no timeline to complete this part of the journey.

He is also working with native people of the Arctic region to reestablish traditional community-building ceremonies via a 2,000-mile canoe trip down the Yukon River. That journey begins in 2007.

“I hope people understand that each person can make a difference,” Francis said. “The first step is being able to listen to each other, be kind, nurturing, and be respectful of each other. That’s thinking outside the box.”

This inspiring event with John Francis *Saving the Planet One Step at a Time*, will be moderated by Sim Van der Ryn and Andres Edwards and include a discussion with College of Marin Biology professor Paul Da Silva about environmental education. For information about this event and the Center for Regenerative Design (CRD) call: (415) 457-8811 ext. 7727 or send an email to: [andres@andresedwards.com](mailto:andres@andresedwards.com)

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