



**AMERICAN
PRAIRIE**

Celebrating
the Indomitable
American Spirit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ken Burns American Heritage Prize to be awarded to Kristine McDivitt Tompkins
Presented by American Prairie in celebration of the indomitable American spirit

American Prairie is proud to announce that president and co-founder of Tompkins Conservation, **Kristine McDivitt Tompkins**, has been selected to be the recipient of the 2023 **Ken Burns American Heritage Prize**. The award will be presented May 10, 2023, at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The evening's festivities will include remarks by Ken Burns, Kristine Tompkins, and American Prairie CEO Alison Fox.

Named in honor of America's most revered visual historian and filmmaker, the [Ken Burns American Heritage Prize](#) celebrates a distinguished and visionary individual whose achievements in the arts, education, literature/history, or science/conservation have advanced our collective understanding of the indomitable American spirit. The candidates are chosen by a National Jury of distinguished leaders who represent communities across the country and share a common appreciation of America's heritage.

"The selection of Kristine Tompkins as the 2023 American Heritage Prize recipient connects two significant conservation projects at an important time in the conservation story. Kris's tenacity and bold rise to the challenge are reflected in the mission of American Prairie." -Ken Burns

Kristine Tompkins is the president and co-founder of [Tompkins Conservation](#), an American conservationist, and former CEO of Patagonia, Inc. For thirty years, she has been committed to protecting and restoring wild beauty and biodiversity by creating national parks, restoring wildlife, inspiring activism, and fostering economic vitality as a result of conservation.

"I am deeply honored to join the impressive list of recipients of the Ken Burns American Heritage Prize. Having visited American Prairie, I understand the critical importance of this important landscape and admire the organization's mission to conserve a fully functioning prairie ecosystem. I want to encourage and facilitate more conversation about where we are going and how we get there faster, and I believe American Prairie plays a key role in the movement to engage the next generation of conservation." -Kristine Tompkins

Kristine and her late husband, Douglas Tompkins, have protected approximately 14.8 million acres of parklands in Chile and Argentina through Tompkins Conservation and its partners, making them among the most successful national park-oriented philanthropists in history. Through Tompkins Conservation and its offspring organizations, she has helped to create or expand 15 national parks in Chile and Argentina, two marine national parks in Argentina, and works to bring back species that have gone locally or nationally extinct, such as the jaguar, red-and-green macaw, and giant river otters in Northeast Argentina, as well as Darwin's rheas and extremely endangered huemul deer in Chile. As president of Tompkins Conservation, she works closely with the organization's now independent offspring, Rewilding Argentina and Rewilding Chile.



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About American Prairie

American Prairie's vision is to create a vast and collaboratively managed prairie destination that serves as a fully functioning ecosystem for wildlife, and offers visitors permanent access to the landscape that shaped our nation's character. American Prairie provides visitors an opportunity to learn about and connect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at americanprairie.org.

About Ken Burns

[Ken Burns](#) has been making documentary films for over forty years. Since the Academy® Award-nominated *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1981, Ken has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, *Jazz*, *The War*, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, *Prohibition*, *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*, *The Vietnam War*, *Country Music*, and, most recently, *The U.S. and the Holocaust*.

Future film projects include *The American Buffalo*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, *The American Revolution*, *Emancipation to Exodus*, and *LBJ & the Great Society*, among others.

Ken's films have been honored with dozens of major awards, including sixteen Emmy® Awards, two GRAMMY Awards, and two Oscar nominations. In September of 2008, at the News & Documentary Emmy® Awards, Ken was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award. In November of 2022, Ken was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame.

About Kristine Tompkins

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Kristine served as Patron for Protected Areas for the UN Environmental Programme from 2018-2022. The recipient of numerous honors, she was the first conservationist to be awarded the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy. Her 2020 TED Talk "[Let's Make the World Wild Again](#)" has been viewed over two million times. Learn more at tompkinsconservation.org.