

NATURE



A WORLD OF MYSTERIES

AMERICAN AMAZON

Written and produced by **Eric Bendick and Thomas Winston**
Executive producers: **Ivo Filatsch, Sabine Holzer**
2 x 50 min., 4K, 5.1 + Stereo



This is a journey into the last secret wilderness in North America.

An ancient bastion of life anchored in place by two-thousand-year-old cypress trees. A labyrinth of flooded forests and pulsing arteries. A place buzzing with new stories: from the mass migration of the world's only social raptor, the swallow-tailed kite, to the dazzling spectacle of the ghost orchid and its surprising nocturnal pollinators. A world where big mysteries still tread around every corner of the swamp: the cryptic behavior of the American black bear, the silent footsteps of the Florida panther. Tales bubbling up from crystalline springs and emerging out of serpentine blackwater rivers: the playful chatter of river otters, the heavy splashes of Gulf sturgeon, and the deep bellows of the American alligator. Here, in the wet and wild American South, among the last stands of cypress, tupelo, strap ferns, pitcher plants, and epiphytes, is what E.O. Wilson called "America's Amazon" – a hotspot of biodiversity rivaling anywhere on Earth – and yet somehow its story has never been told.

This is not a world where life comes easy. Flooded by epic tropical rains. Ravaged by intense wildfires. Locked in time by rare freeze events. This kingdom absorbs every extreme, and yet, like the delicate resurrection fern, always springs back to life. Among the ceaseless ebb and flow, life seeks a foothold, a sanctuary, a home:

Episode 1, HIDDEN FORESTS

is a journey unveiling spectacular life in the deepest realms of southern swamps – from the unheralded heroes of the liquid forest floor to the high-flying acrobats that rule the canopy.

Episode 2, SECRET RIVERS

is an odyssey of discovery along the south's wildest rivers – an immersive encounter with stunning wildlife, up-close natural history, and surprising revelations from source to sea.

While most of North America was trapped in solid ice, life was still flourishing in the swamps and rivers of the American southeast. Here, the party never stopped. A trifecta of climate, geology, and evolutionary history kicked off an explosion of plants and animals – a profusion of species unrivaled elsewhere in the United States. Yet their stories often seem just out of reach. Look closer, dive deeper, fly higher, and swim farther – to uncover the gripping tales we've all

been waiting for. Sagas of heroism, survival, adaptation, and animal ingenuity with a dash of authentic southern flair mixed in. But what happens when you stir together an all-star cast of charismatic wild things deep in the heart of the American south? We're about to find out.

This *AMERICAN AMAZON*, its layers of incomparable life, its arresting beauty and untold drama, may be the world's best kept secret. But its secrets are not safe. In the last refugia of the wild south, we will preserve this ancient world only by sharing its stories, by exploring the riddles of these deep, dark, green oases, charting a course through a maze of wood and water, and bringing back wonders from the other side.

A co-production of The WNET Group and Terra Mater Studios
in association with PBS and CPB produced by Grizzly Creek



#terramatters