

LIVING PLANET SPEAKER SERIES

Six nights a year, built to become a Utah institution

PREPARED FOR
Living Planet Aquarium

PREPARED BY
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WEB
fatfishmedia.com

SIX NIGHTS UTAH TALKS ABOUT

You want to build a recognizable Utah institution: a premium annual series whose name alone tells an audience the night will be worth it. We think the room you just built is the reason it can work. No theater in the state puts 1,500 people a few steps from a 300,000-gallon shark habitat, and no speaker series in the country opens its doors with sharks behind the bar.

The programming you described is exactly the right lane: science, technology, exploration, artificial intelligence, nature, human achievement, and business. People who discovered something, explored something, built something consequential. Intellectually ambitious, broadly appealing, and never politically identified.

Fat Fish would take everything on the production side of that ambition: programming, talent booking, creative, scenic, staffing, show running, and the AV that makes a talk feel like a show. The Aquarium keeps what it already does best, selling the season and marketing it to the community, and owns the box office and the sponsors. These pages are how season one comes together.

WHAT WASATCH ALREADY PROVED

Utah already has a subscription speaker series, and it sells out. That is good news. It proves the appetite, the price tolerance, and the renewal habit. It also leaves a lane wide open.

THE MODEL

The Wasatch Speaker Series was started in the 2017-18 season by Gary and Rob Lauer, a Park City father and son. Seven evenings, October through April, at Abravanel Hall downtown. Sold only as a full-season subscription; no single tickets, ever. The first season filled the hall when they had hoped for half. The second sold out before public sale on a waitlist, and it has run on renewals since: current subscribers renew in a two-week June window, then open seats go to the waitlist.

THE NIGHT

7:30 to 9:00. Forty to fifty-five minutes of prepared remarks, then thirty-five to forty-five minutes of audience questions. Nothing is recorded or rebroadcast; subscribers who cannot attend can buy a members-only livestream for a small fee. Presented by Intermountain Health as the season sponsor. Salt Lake's private clubs sell their own pre-show dinners around it.

THE NAMES

World leaders, journalists, scientists, and authors. Season one opened with Joe Biden, Jane Goodall, and Sanjay Gupta. The 2026-27 lineup is Justin Trudeau, Sanna Marin, Jack Smith, Annie Leibovitz, Dr. John Whyte, Dr. Albert Lin, and Dr. Amber Straughn. Politics and public life carry the marquee; science and exploration are the supporting acts.

	WASATCH SPEAKER SERIES	LIVING PLANET SPEAKER SERIES
Venue	Abravanel Hall, 2,768 seats, downtown	Your event center, 1,500 theater, sharks in the prefunction
Season	Seven evenings, October to April	Six evenings, timed around the Aquarium's calendar
Subject	World affairs, politics, journalism, some science	Science, exploration, AI, nature, achievement, business
Format	Lecture plus Q&A, one format every night	Main stage, fireside with dinner, and small-room formats
Hospitality	None in the hall; outside clubs sell dinners	VIP prefunction for 200 with Aramark, built into the season
Sales	Subscription only, renewal first, waitlist	Same engine, plus premium tiers the venue makes possible

The lane that is open. Wasatch owns the politics-and-public-life audience and has no hospitality, no small formats, and no venue story. Living Planet can own science, exploration, and the natural world, in a building that is the story, with a night that starts at the bar in front of the shark tank. Nobody else in Utah can offer that, and nobody in the country is doing it inside an aquarium.

A FIRST SEASON, AS A STARTING POINT

Six nights, each with a clear theme and a format that fits it. The names are calibration, drawn from your list and ours; nothing here is booked. The point is the shape of a season.

NIGHT	THEME	CALIBRATION GUESTS	FORMAT
October	The ocean	Sylvia Earle, Robert Ballard	Main stage, season opener with VIP prefunction
November	Artificial intelligence	Fei-Fei Li, Ramez Naam	Main stage, plus a student block
January	Space and exploration	Chris Hadfield	Main stage
February	Building something consequential	Ryan Smith, Marc Andreessen	Fireside with dinner, 300 seats
March	The science that changes medicine	Jennifer Doudna, Brian Cox	Main stage
May	The wild	Paul Rosolie, Peter Diamandis	Main stage, season finale with after-party in the galleries

Ideas you may not have considered. A resident host who opens every night and interviews every guest, so the series has a voice of its own. One Utah-made night a season: the scientists, founders, and explorers who live here, from the Great Salt Lake to the Wasatch. A standing student block of seats every night, underwritten by a sponsor, so the audience gets younger every year. And a launch night before the season, for subscribers and sponsors only, in the galleries after hours.

MORE THAN A LECTURE

One format every night is how a series becomes routine. Four formats, chosen to fit the guest and the room, is how it becomes an institution. All four are built from the same crew, stage, and season brand.

MAIN STAGE

The signature night. A 45-minute talk, then 30 minutes in conversation with the host and the audience. Custom stage, IMAG screens, broadcast-quality lighting and sound, and a season look that reads from the parking lot to the stage.

1,500 SEATS, THEATER

FIRESIDE WITH DINNER

A seated dinner by Aramark with the guest in conversation at the center of the room, no podium, no slides. Smaller, closer, and priced as the premium tier of the season. Ideal for the business and founder nights, and the easiest format for a sponsor to host.

200 TO 300 SEATS, DINNER ROUNDS

VIP PREFUNCTION

Attached to every main stage night. Drinks and appetizers in the prefunction with the shark habitat as the backdrop, sponsor hospitality, a photo moment, and, when the guest agrees, fifteen minutes with the speaker before doors.

200 GUESTS, ONE HOUR BEFORE DOORS

AFTER HOURS

Once or twice a season: the guest, your curators, and a small group in the galleries after close. The format only an aquarium can offer, and the one subscribers will talk about most.

40 GUESTS, GALLERIES AFTER CLOSE

EVERYTHING BUT THE TICKET WINDOW

Fat Fish runs the series. The Aquarium sells it and owns it. That line keeps the client, the subscriber, and the sponsor relationships where they belong, and puts the production risk with the people built to carry it.

AREA	FAT FISH	AQUARIUM
Programming	Builds the season, themes, and shortlist; pitches formats for each guest	Approves the season and every name
Talent booking	Sources, negotiates, and contracts speakers through the bureaus; manages riders and travel	Funds speaker fees; final sign-off
AV and production	Full production at preferred series rates: audio, video, lighting, IMAG, network, capture	In-house system available to the series
Creative and brand	Season identity, stage design, screen content, opening film, venue branding	Brand approval
Scenic and decor	Designs, builds, and manages stage and room decor for every format	Facilities access
Graphic printing	Signage, programs, sponsor recognition, wayfinding	Content approval
Staffing	Crew, stage management, speaker handlers, show caller	Front of house, guest services, security
Show running	Run of show, rehearsals, cues, the night itself	Hosts the guests and the sponsors
Marketing	Assets and content on request	Owns the campaign, PR, and community
Ticket sales and subscriptions	Not involved	Owns the box office, renewals, and the waitlist
Sponsorship	Builds sponsor activations and hospitality on site	Sells and owns sponsor relationships
Food and beverage	Coordinates timing and room flow	Aramark, as the exclusive partner

HOW THE MONEY WORKS

The Aquarium owns every revenue line: subscriptions, premium tiers, sponsorship, and hospitality. Fat Fish is paid for what it delivers, at rates set for the series rather than for a one-off event, so the incentive is to make every season bigger than the last.

What the Aquarium earns

Season subscriptions across tiers: general, premium, VIP with prefunction, and fireside dinner seats

A presenting sponsor for the season, the way Intermountain Health presents Wasatch

Night sponsors, hospitality sponsors, and a student-seat sponsor

Food and beverage through Aramark on every prefunction and dinner

A members-only livestream add-on for subscribers who miss a night

How Fat Fish is paid

Production at preferred series rates: a fixed package per night, set once for the season

A booking fee on each speaker contract for sourcing, negotiation, and talent management

Creative, scenic, and printing per season, quoted up front

No share of ticket or sponsor revenue unless you want us to have one

The renewal engine is the whole business. Wasatch fills next season in a two-week June window before the public sees a ticket. We build Living Planet to do the same from year one.

SEASON ONE, STEP BY STEP

- 1 Agree the shape of season one: six nights, the mix of formats, the subscription tiers, and the speaker budget.
- 2 Form a small programming group, Aquarium and Fat Fish, and lock the first three names.
- 3 Fat Fish opens talent conversations through the bureaus and builds the season identity and stage design.
- 4 Announce the season at a launch night in the galleries, open renewals first, then the waitlist.

Brent, let's build season one.

Give us an hour with your team and we will bring a full season on paper, three names we can realistically land, and a production plan for the room.

[Schedule the conversation](#)pete@fatfishmedia.com