

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 26, 2012

**TANGLED BANK STUDIOS, A PRODUCTION COMPANY FROM
THE HOWARD HUGHES MEDICAL INSTITUTE, LAUNCHES**

Inaugural Productions Include Films on Cartography and Evolution

Chevy Chase, MD—The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) today announced the launch of Tangled Bank Studios, a new film and media production company that aims to be a significant contributor to the science documentary arena. The new company, helmed by Michael Rosenfeld, Head of Television and Film, will produce programs that tell powerful stories across all branches of science for broadcast, theatrical, and digital media. HHMI also announced several Tangled Bank film projects and collaborators.

Tangled Bank Studios is the cornerstone of HHMI's \$60 million television and film production initiative, which was announced last year. The company is an extension of HHMI's longstanding commitment to science education. HHMI is the largest private supporter of science education in the United States. Footage from every Tangled Bank Studios film or series will also be used to create short films for the classroom for HHMI's award-winning educational media program.

The inaugural slate of Tangled Bank Studios productions includes:

- *Your Inner Fish*, a scientific adventure story based on the best-selling book by paleontologist and anatomist Neil Shubin, Ph.D., of the University of Chicago. It takes us from Kenya to the Arctic Circle to uncover the 3.5 billion year history of the human body—and how our ancient ancestors have shaped our anatomy. This three-part series is being produced in collaboration with U.K. production company Windfall Films.
- *The Quest to Map the World*, a three-part series that tells the epic story of the scientists and explorers who risked their lives to map the planet and, in the process, changed our understanding of the world we inhabit. The series is produced in conjunction with National Geographic Television.

These programs are being developed and produced in close collaboration with PBS, the U.S. broadcaster for this educational and entertaining content. Off the Fence, an independent distribution company based in Amsterdam, will distribute these films internationally as part of an exclusive deal to license, presell and raise coproduction finance for Tangled Bank Studios' television documentaries.

The new production company is led by Michael Rosenfeld, who will act as executive producer. Rosenfeld is an Emmy-winning producer, writer, and television executive with extensive leadership experience in documentary production and new media. Accomplished producer David Elisco serves as director of development.

“The scientific mysteries explored in these initial Tangled Bank productions possess drama that is sure to be universally appealing,” said Rosenfeld. “Our goal at Tangled Bank Studios is to capture the adventure and excitement of science and share that with mass audiences via great entertainment anchored by great science.”

Tangled Bank Studios is an editorially independent production company created by HHMI, a nonprofit medical research organization that ranks as one of the nation’s largest philanthropies and plays a powerful role in advancing biomedical research in the United States and throughout the world. Each Tangled Bank Studios production will have an independent advisory board of scientists and experts to review program content.

The film initiative falls under the purview of noted evolutionary biologist and science communicator Sean B. Carroll, Ph.D., Vice President for Science Education at HHMI. “Film remains the most powerful mass medium for communicating ideas and stories, and science is one of the most important but least understood domains in our culture,” said Carroll. “We are looking forward to bringing rich, important stories to audiences of all ages.”

The Tangled Bank Studios name is inspired by the poetic final paragraph of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* and reflects the company’s ambition to marry a deeper understanding of science with a sense of wonder about the natural world.

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us.

-Charles Darwin
On the Origin of Species

About Tangled Bank Studios

Tangled Bank Studios, LLC, is a production company dedicated to the creation of original science documentaries for broadcast, theatrical, and digital distribution. Founded in 2012 by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as an extension of its long-standing science education mission, the company aims to produce programs that capture compelling stories of discovery across all branches of scientific inquiry. Headquartered in Chevy Chase, MD, Tangled Bank Studios partners with producers, broadcasters, and distributors around the world. For more information please visit: www.tangledbankstudios.org

About The Howard Hughes Medical Institute

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a nonprofit medical research organization that ranks as one of the nation's largest philanthropies, plays a powerful role in advancing biomedical research and science education in the United States. The Institute is a nonprofit medical research organization that employs hundreds of leading biomedical scientists working at the forefronts of their fields. In addition, through its grants program and other activities, HHMI helps enhance science education at all levels and maintain the vigor of biomedical science worldwide.

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