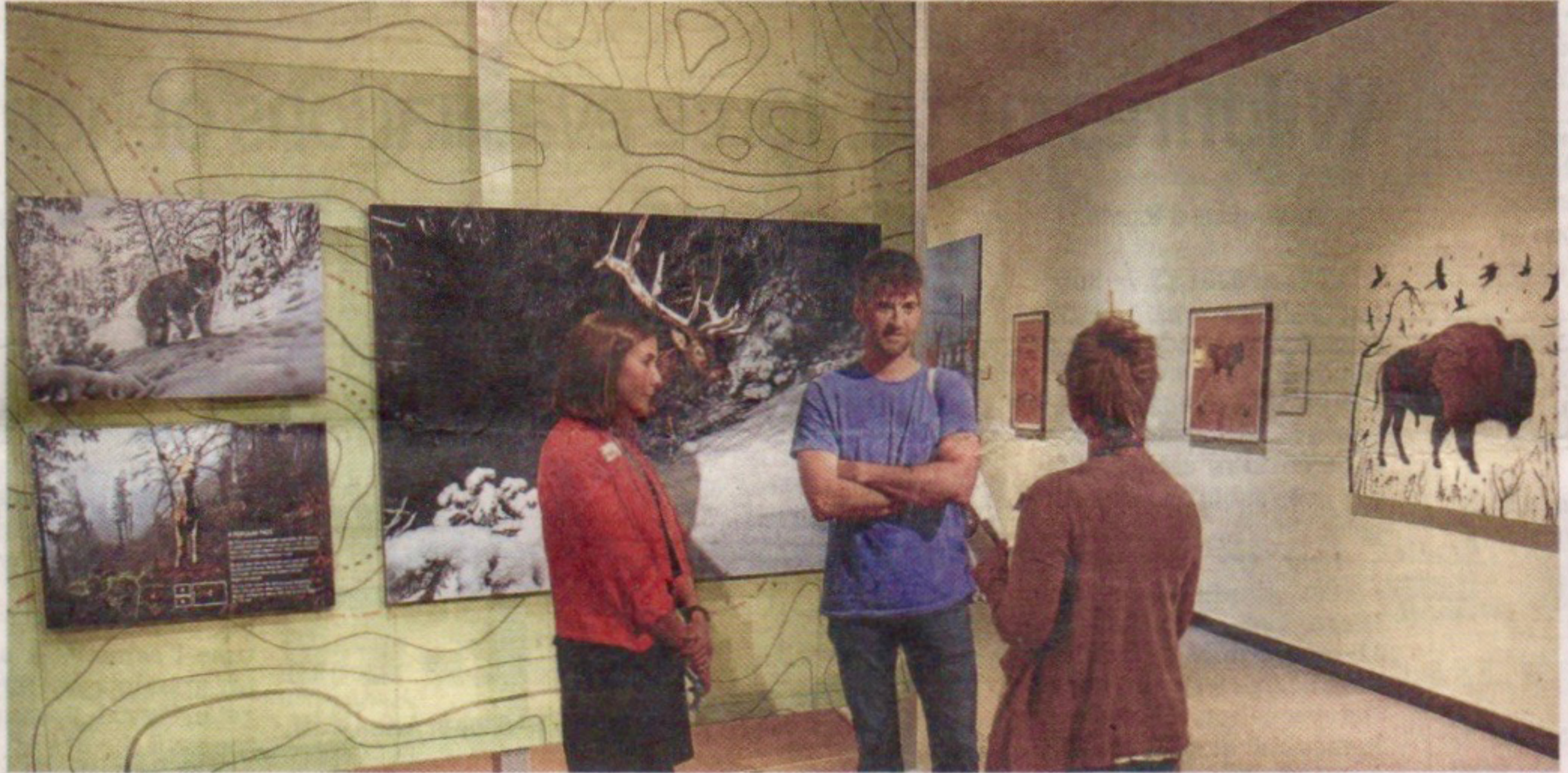


Invisible boundaries



BRETT FRENCH/Gazette Staff photos

Artist James Prosek, center, sees the Draper Museum of Natural History's exhibit "Invisible Boundaries" for the first time on Thursday. Prosek contributed about 25 pieces to the display. Talking to the artist are Karen Brooks McWhorter, curator of Western art, at left, and Bonnie Smith, curatorial assistant.

Cody exhibit explores wildlife in Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

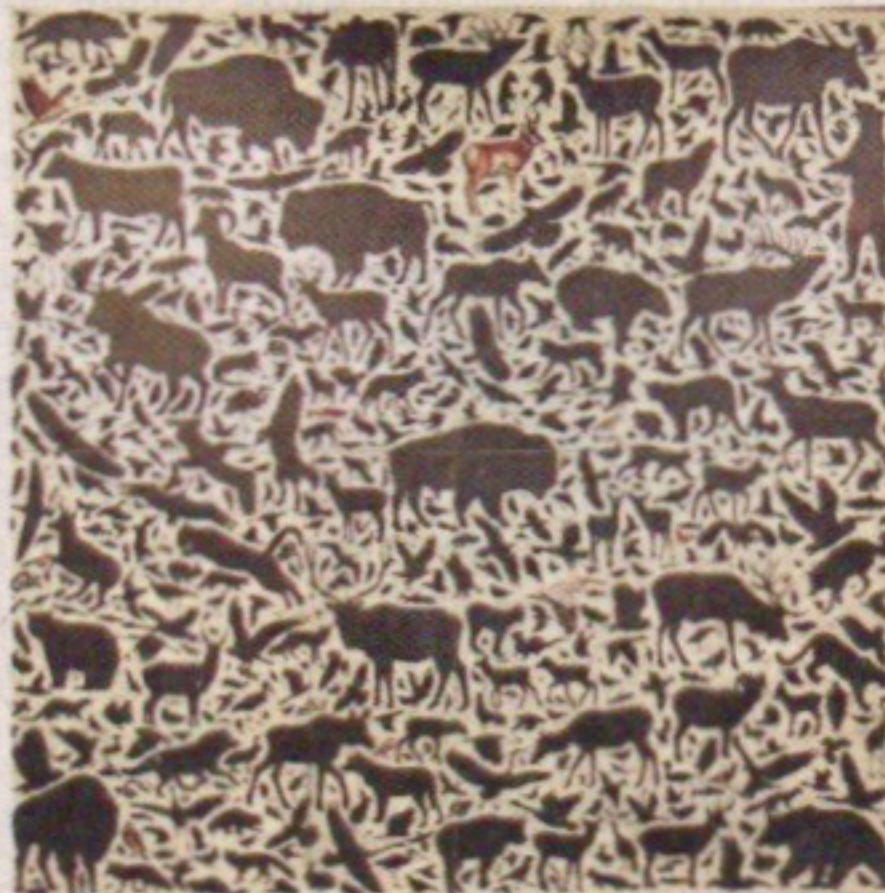
By **BRETT FRENCH**
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CODY, Wyo. — James Prosek admitted to feeling a bit unnerved when the horse he was on topped a mountain last summer and in the distance loomed a massive male grizzly bear.

"That's an image I will carry with me forever — to be on the same ground with a huge grizzly bear," the Connecticut artist said.

Prosek was in Cody on Thursday to help unveil a new exhibit he was involved in: "Invisible Boundaries: Exploring Yellowstone's Great Animal Migrations."

The combination of art, photography and science that led to the creation of Yellowstone as the nation's first national park in 1872 has been modernized in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's newest interactive exhibit to include filmmaker Jenny Nichol's videography. It's a project that has been in the works for three years.



This 56 x 90 inch artwork is James Prosek's favorite out of the more than 25 pieces he created for the "Invisible Boundaries" exhibit. He hopes the work makes viewers think about how interrelations of Yellowstone's wildlife.

"The art and photography bring the science alive," said Bonnie Smith, cura-

torial assistant.

Prize

The purpose of the research was threefold, according to Chuck Preston, curator of the Draper Museum of Natural History within the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. One was to provide innovative science, which has been supplied by biologists Arthur Middleton and Joe Riis — with the aid of state and federal counterparts — in their study of animal migrations in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Number two was to show how even though this was taking place in the GYE, it has an application around the world. And thirdly, it had to be successfully communicated to the public.

"Most of my colleagues don't think about that," Preston said of publicizing science.

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BRETT FRENCH/Gazette Staff photos

The newly displayed "Invisible Boundaries" exhibit melds science, photography, videography and art in an interactive way.

Exhibit

Continued from A1

The research was funded by the first Camp Monaco Prize, a partnership of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation-USA, the Draper Natural History Museum and the University of Wyoming's Biodiversity Institute.

The work is on exhibit through December and is concurrently on display at the National Geographic headquarters in Washington, D.C.

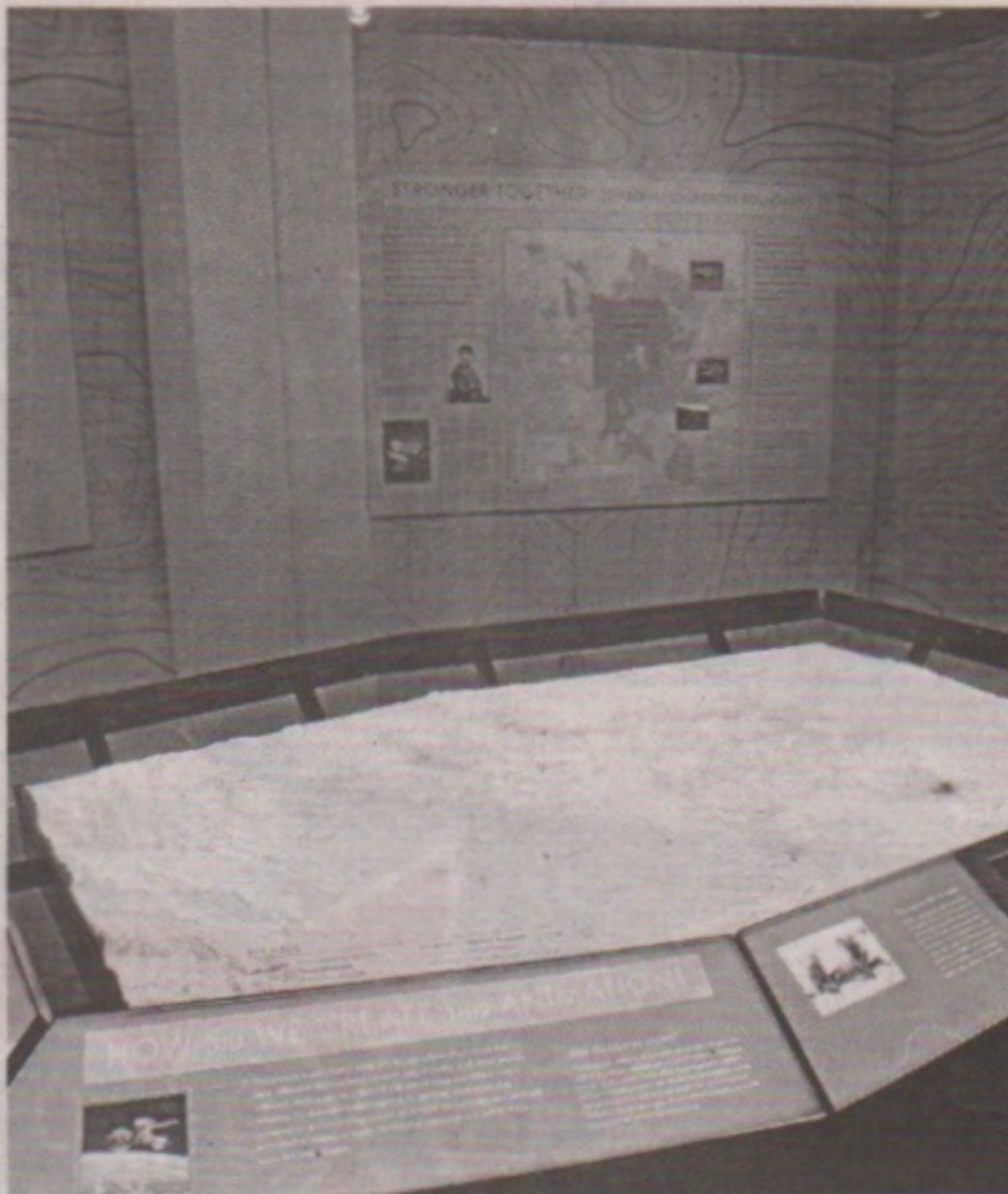
"I hope people take away the amazing natural challenge and incredible drama it is for the migrating animals," Preston said. "But also the fact that they cross all sorts of boundaries that weren't set out for them: private to public lands, a national park to wilderness areas. What we do on private and public lands affects wildlife across the ecosystem."

Lines

Those invisible boundaries are what intrigued Prosek and helped him formulate the more than 25 artworks he created for the show over the past year-and-a-half — from field studies of a Yellowstone cutthroat trout to a silkscreen of army cutworm moths, and a 56-inch-by-90-inch oil and acrylic painting on wood panels depicting the black silhouettes of numerous Yellowstone species, with a chosen few depicted in color for contrast.

"I'm interested in the lines we draw through things in nature," he said.

Scientists, for example, have to draw distinctions



The interactive map in the foreground displays information gathered from collared elk as they migrated into and out of the Yellowstone area from the surrounding states of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho.



The fuzziness of Prosek's silkscreen print of moths is meant to convey the constant movement of the insects that are a prime source of protein for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

between species to be able to talk about them, he explained. That's similar to lines on a map.

Those same invisible

lines mean that a bull elk is a hunter's trophy outside of Yellowstone National Park and a tourist attraction inside the park, Prosek said.

Migrants

Although Middleton and Riis' study of elk, deer and pronghorn seasonal migrations into and out of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is a highlight of the exhibit accentuated by large reproductions of Riis' captivating wildlife photos. Prosek and Preston noted there are other migrants in the park who have traveled much farther like birds and even moths. Those long-traveled migrants also demonstrate how actions far from Yellowstone can have consequences in the nation's first national park.

Prosek pointed to army cutworm moths as an example. The moths fly to the park's high mountains each year to feed at night on the nectar of flowers, and in doing so provide an important food source for grizzly bears, which can eat up to 40,000 moths a day. If those moths are killed by pesticides in a farmer's field thousands of miles away, the repercussions would be felt in Yellowstone.

"We have to realize this Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is connected to the rest of the world in a greater way," Preston said.

"I hope this kind of exhibit will be a springboard in conversations, an understanding that everyone has a stake in this — including landowners and agriculture — pulling all of those people together and creating a common vision," he added. "To me, that's what a great exhibit does. It's a conversation starter, not a conversation ender."

"I think we're all stewards of this place, so how can we work together to preserve what we all value?"