

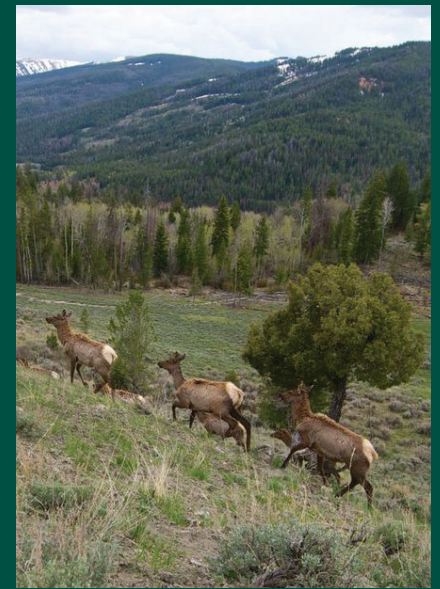


# Invisible Boundaries: the Seasonal Journeys of Yellowstone's Wildlife

*Organized by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West along with its Draper Natural History Museum and Whitney Western Art Museum; in partnership with Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Yale Institute for Biospheric Studies*

**Y**ellowstone National Park (YNP) is the world's original wildlife conservation area, and among its most beloved today. Increasingly, scientists and park managers are recognizing that the fate of YNP wildlife hinges on lands and events far beyond its defined boundaries. Similarly, wildlife management decisions within YNP impact private landowners and other stakeholders outside the park. The popular concept of a Greater Yellowstone "Ecosystem"—a landscape so ecologically, economically, and culturally intertwined that it requires special management that transcends jurisdictional boundaries—has superficially succeeded in helping the public see connections between the natural systems inside the park and the world outside. Yet translating the concept to reality remains a great challenge of the coming century.

**BUFFALO BILL  
CENTER  
OF THE WEST**



■ **Dr. Charles Preston**

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The Buffalo Bill Center of the West, partnering with the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, proposes an ambitious, interdisciplinary museum exhibition that combines emerging historical and scientific insights with the visual arts to explore some of the challenges and opportunities of managing wide-ranging wildlife across a multi-use landscape. The exhibition and associated events and products will showcase—for a worldwide audience—the importance of transboundary conservation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and the critical need to involve diverse stakeholders, in both concept and practice.

Few natural phenomena better illustrate the importance of transboundary conservation—or better captivate the public—than long-distance migrations. More than one hundred species of mammals, birds, and insects come from dozens to thousands of miles away to make their summer home in YNP, only to depart again to wintering grounds elsewhere. They arrive in the park from local ranches and even foreign countries, from nearby foothills and faraway oceans. They make the system richer and more closely connected to the outside world.

Through the exhibition, visitors are treated to a spectacular array of large-format, color photographs and aerial and ground video clips illustrating the cross-country journeys and challenges faced by migrating herds of large, grazing mammals, including close-ups of individual animals. Many of the photographs were captured by remote camera traps along migratory corridors of elk, mule deer, and pronghorn—a technique that National Geographic photographer Joe Riis has honed to a fine art! These stunning visuals will be accompanied by dynamic maps of key Yellowstone migrations documented during recent field research led by Arthur Middleton. The exhibition is supported through historical reports and documents.

*“Yellowstone National Park can neither contain nor completely sustain its treasured wildlife”*

— **CHARLES PRESTON,**  
Willis McDonald, IV Senior Curator,  
Draper Natural History Museum



Another feature of the exhibition, the provocative and visually striking original artwork of James Prosek, presents animal movements and land boundaries from new perspectives, provoking a conversation about the promise and challenge of defining a landscape such as GYE. Prosek inspires us to consider our individual understanding of this beloved place, the evolving relationship between people and nature, and what it means for the next century of conservation.

The use of elk, deer and pronghorn migration as a focal story in the exhibit reflects the importance of Yellowstone's contemporary migrants, and it helps illustrate why migrations are not only ecologically but also economically and culturally important. Each spring in the GYE, thousands of elk in at least nine distinct populations travel up to one hundred miles, from far-flung winter ranges in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, to high-elevation summer ranges near the Park's core. These elk migrations link the ecosystem's foothills to its high mountain wilderness. Their abundance sustains diverse carnivores and scavengers, attracts tens of millions of dollars to nearby communities through hunting and tourism, and inspires our image of wilderness. The elk migrations play a very clear and practical role in defining the GYE as we know it—highlighting the fact that the system's future health depends to a large degree on collaborative efforts reaching well beyond the boundaries of parks and wilderness.

The concept of transboundary stewardship connecting protected areas and their adjacent landscapes applies globally, and YNP itself is a global stage. The exhibition will open in nearby Cody, Wyoming, in summer 2016, the 100th anniversary of our national park system. The exhibition shares historical significance with the park's centennial celebration. In 1872 the collaboration of a scientist (Ferdinand Hayden), a photographer (William Henry Jackson) and an artist (Thomas Moran) fueled the public interest necessary to establish Yellowstone as the world's first national park. This contemporary collaboration and the exhibition's commentary echoes the interdisciplinary, transboundary foundation on which Yellowstone was built. It is a fitting and forward-looking tribute to YNP and the national park system.

The subject and approach of the exhibition are central to the mission and past successful initiatives of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's Draper Natural History Museum, established in 2002 to illuminate the science of Greater Yellowstone and the relationships binding people and nature in this treasured place. This exhibition will also draw upon the Center's interdisciplinary strengths, blending science with photojournalism and original, visual art to tell the story of the crucial connections from YNP to the land beyond.

At a time when migrating wildlife in the GYE encounter an ever-increasing morass of jurisdictional, and sometimes physical, boundaries this exhibition will encourage visitors to consider important conservation questions: When we think about nature, where do we draw lines? How do we draw lines and why do we need them?

