

## WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM

*Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,  
Where the deer and the antelope play,  
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word  
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

The National Park Service in Yellowstone

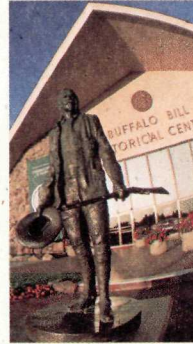
National Park and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center have collaborated to present *Where the Buffalo Roam*,



an exhibition on the fascinating story of buffalo in Yellowstone. In this family friendly exhibit at Yellowstone's Canyon Visitor Center, visitors can watch videos, listen to the sounds of wild animals, and interact with displays. Visitors will also see a life-size diorama of a buffalo "baby-sitting group" – a buffalo cow caring for three calves, only one of which is her own. Organized around the lyrics of the song "Home on the Range" the exhibition is divided into five sections with a central diorama. The exhibit highlights the origins of the buffalo's home in Yellowstone Park, their habits and roaming behavior, and their place in Yellowstone's ecosystem. Current issues are also explored, including the brucellosis controversy and the devastating winter of 1996-97. Visitors will have the opportunity to comment on the exhibit and express their thoughts about its contents. The exhibit is free to all Yellowstone visitors and is open from late May to mid-September. ■

THE BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER includes four museums and a research library in a single 237,000 square foot complex. These museums, the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, the Buffalo Bill Museum, the Plains Indian Museum and the Cody Firearms Museum, as well as the McCracken Research Library, form the world's most comprehensive assemblage of material on the subject of the American West. Approximately 250,000 visitors annually tour the complex to gain a deeper understanding of this important segment of the American experience.

Yellowstone National Park was established as the world's first national park in 1872.



Yellowstone is home to a remarkable diversity of wildlife, birds, and fish and is recognized as an International Biosphere Preserve and World Heritage Site. The park's more than two million acres include spectacular waterfalls, steaming geysers and panoramic vistas. Popular sights include Old Faithful Geyser, the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone Lake and Hayden Valley.

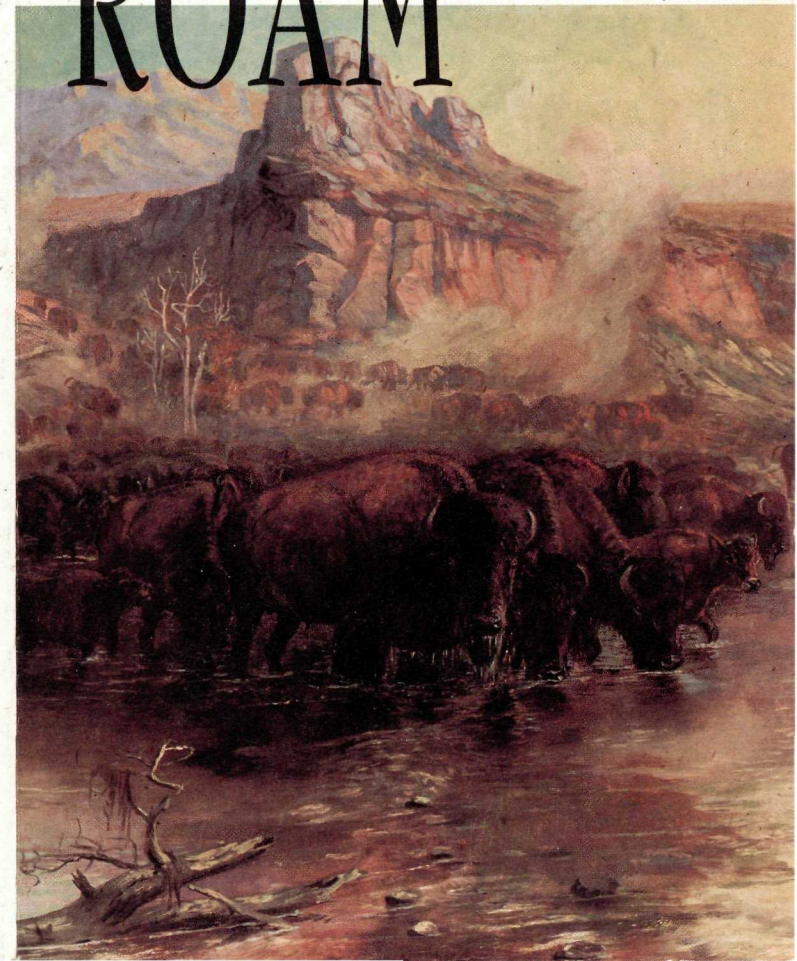
*Where the Buffalo Roam* was made possible by generous support from The Park County Travel Council, Shoshone First Bank of Cody, Wyoming, Nancy-Carroll Draper, Yellowstone National Park, and the National Park Foundation.



BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER

720 Sheridan Avenue • Cody, Wyoming 82414

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**B**UFFALO (scientific name: *Bison Bison*) once roamed North America in great herds which stretched as far as the eye could see. Today, in Yellowstone National Park, visitors can still witness wild buffalo in a natural environment. In 1872 the United States Congress established Yellowstone as "a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people," preserving the park's wildlife and natural resources. By that time, however, the continent's great herds of buffalo had been reduced from tens of millions to a few thousand. In the 1870s poachers and hunters continued to kill the park's remaining buffalo. It was not until the army was sent to safeguard the park in 1886 that the buffalo were truly protected.

In 1902 only 23 wild buffalo were counted in Yellowstone's Pelican Valley. To increase the size of the herds, the buffalo were bred and ranched like cattle. In the 1930s the park began managing the species in a more natural manner. By 1968 the park's buffalo population was allowed to increase or decrease in response to

environmental conditions and the buffalo were truly wild once again. As the winter of 1996-97 began, the park's buffalo herd numbered approximately 3,500 animals.

Buffalo play a key role in Yellowstone's ecosystem. A large bull bison can measure six feet tall at the shoulder and weigh a ton. Even bears and wolves are reluctant to attack a herd of buffalo. When a buffalo dies, however, it becomes a feast for scavengers of all types and sizes, from grizzly bears to magpies.

Nomadic, social, and powerful, the buffalo is well adapted to the natural world of Yellowstone National Park, but they have one big problem—humans. The park's buffalo live in the wild, not by our civilized rules. Unlike at a zoo or a ranch, visitors to Yellowstone can see buffalo behaving naturally. Park visitors who approach buffalo and other wild animals too closely risk serious injury or worse. Problems also occur when buffalo move outside Yellowstone's boundaries.

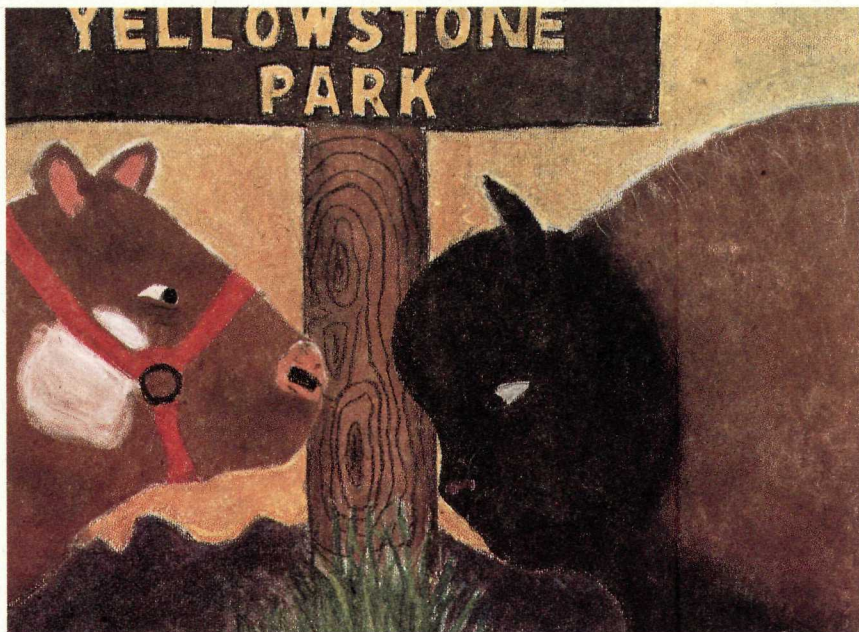
At the heart of the controversy about buffalo leaving Yellowstone National Park is the disease brucellosis.

Brucellosis is caused by a bacterium that infects many wild animals. It can also infect domestic cattle causing cows to spontaneously abort their calves, creating economic consequences for ranchers. Although there has never been a recorded case of wild buffalo infecting cattle with brucellosis, and other migrating animals such as elk also carry the disease, the buffalo issue has sparked continuing controversy. The state of Montana fears it will lose its brucellosis-free designation if buffalo continue to migrate from the park, which will impact the state's cattle industry. Consequently, when buffalo leave Yellowstone's North or West entrances, most are killed and attempts to force the buffalo back into the park are usually unsuccessful.



Today, more than one hundred and twenty-five years since the park was founded, the future of Yellowstone's free-ranging buffalo herd is again in doubt. Buffalo have long been a symbol of what is wild and free, an icon of our natural heritage. However, if buffalo are no longer allowed to roam free, can any wild animal have a place in our modern world? And will humans survive if we fail to find ways to preserve and maintain the remnants of our planet's natural ecosystems?

*Where the Buffalo Roam* was developed as a collaborative effort between Yellowstone National Park and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is located 52 miles from the East Entrance of Yellowstone Park in Cody, Wyoming. This internationally acclaimed institution is the repository of the world's foremost collection of art, artifacts, and memorabilia related to the American West. ■



Lu Anderson and Trevor Brown of Montana, ages 8 and 14, *Imagine Yellowstone*, tempera, 1993.