

Asking for SARC Student Research & Creativity Awards Fund

This letter was originally written to gain funding in the amount of \$832.23 for a creative research project to Yellowstone National Park to study the movements and impact of wolves on the ecosystem to inform a body of artwork that will be part of a culminating BFA solo exhibition at Chico State in Spring 2023.

October 21, 2022
Jordan Zoey Rosenthal
BFA with an emphasis in Painting

A Keystone Species: Investigating the Impact of the Reintroduction of Wolves in Yellowstone

The purpose of this project is to fund a creative week-long research expedition to Yellowstone National Park to study the interactions of wolves, learn from rangers who are wolf experts, and make photos, plein air sketches, and other visual documentation. This research will inform future artwork for my BFA culminating exhibition in spring 2023. The budget for the project is \$832.23 for gas, lodging, and entrance to the National Park.

My work visualizes the struggle against biodiversity loss as a result of climate change in the age of human disturbance. Currently the impact of returning biodiversity to the area and how species have flourished due to the return of wolves informs my paintings. *The Yellowstone Wolf Reintroduction Project's* goal was to restore a key predator to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and it has been a huge success. I will spend the majority of my time in the Lamar Valley where the Junction Butte pack, which has nineteen wolves, roams. Winter is one of the best times to see wolves as they appear more with less people in the park. Wolves are crepuscular, meaning they are usually active at dawn and dusk. I will be waking before dawn to get into the park to view them and waiting at dusk to spot wolves within the landscape from a safe distance with a high powered viewing scope. I will also use this time to document my findings with photographs that will contribute to my next body of work. Painting from life, or en plein air, where the artist is outside and painting from a moving animal, allows me to get a better understanding of what the joints, muscles, and fur looks like as my subject moves and as the light hits it, therefore creating a much more realistic painting. Infusing a lifelike quality will help to construct a more convincing argument for the perpetuation of protection.

In meeting with local officials who facilitate and take part in the practice of wolf watching I hope to gather more research from first person sources about how the Yellowstone Wolf Project will continue to develop their future conservation efforts. Learning first hand how park rangers are protecting the species during hunting season will help me better understand how to make paintings about the need to protect the species. Recently, in February 2022, a federal court case struck down a decision made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2020 that removed federal protections for gray wolves and delisted them from the Endangered Species List. The federal protection of gray wolves was reinstated in 44 states in the US, except for Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, the areas where the wolves from the Yellowstone Wolf Project reside (Chiappinelli, 2022). This research will allow me to understand wolves on a deeper level, imbue my next body of work with their spirit, and improve my ability to inform my audience of

the importance of protecting the Yellowstone Ecosystem and how their reintroduction has changed the land for the better.

The purpose of my BFA culminating solo exhibition will be to present 5 to 6 large scale paintings, approximately 4 to 6 feet in scale. The paintings will focus on humanities efforts to repair the ecosystem after destroying the Yellowstone wolf population in the 1920's and our complex relationship with nature in the Anthropocene. As a BFA student at Chico State my artwork and research sets an example for the art program and what Chico state has to offer incoming students. It also brings awareness to the issue of conservation. Although I have achieved some exhibitions already, this exhibition will be my first solo show, which will help to prepare me for a successful career after graduation.

Since I'll be traveling in winter it will be necessary to have indoor lodging instead of camping as weather can range from temperatures of -3 degrees to 24 degrees fahrenheit. The list of expenses is as follows, \$35 entrance fee to the National Park, \$222.23 for an estimated mileage of 1,334 miles (includes a round trip from CA to MT), \$575 for a 7 night cabin rental in Gardiner MT for a total budget of \$832.23.

Itemized Budget	
Entrance Fee to Yellowstone National Park	\$35
Airbnb Rental in Gardiner MT	\$575
Fuel for RT from CA-MT (1,334 miles approx.)	\$222.23

Thank you for reading my proposed project.

Zoey Rosenthal
Bachelors of Fine Art in Studio Art

References Cited

Chiappinelli, Jackson. "Gray Wolves Regain Federal Endangered Species Act Protections." *Earthjustice*, Earthjustice, 10 Feb. 2022, <https://earthjustice.org/news/press/2022/gray-wolves-regain-federal-endangered-species-act-protections>.