

OCTOBER 2021

# NOTES OF A NATURALIST

A monthly newsletter bringing you the species, landscape, history, and happenings of the Taft-Nicholson Center

## Animals on the Move

The first snow of the season has fallen over Centennial Valley, marking the slow approach of winter. This means elk, deer, and pronghorn are nearing the end of their mating seasons and will begin their treks to seek out milder winter habitats at lower elevations. Centennial Valley is an important migratory corridor. It's a linkage between the Greater Yellowstone and other ecosystems in Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. Maintaining relatively undeveloped migration corridors such as Centennial Valley is important for ensuring the future of animal migrations.

Some of the most impressive terrestrial migrations in the contiguous United States are seen in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This region is relatively intact compared to other ecosystems elsewhere in the United States. Despite this, it's estimated that 75% of ungulate migratory pathways have already disappeared in the Greater Yellowstone. Roads, fences, residential subdivisions, and resource extraction all pose significant challenges to migrating animals.

In Centennial Valley, many private landowners have entered into voluntary conservation easements that keep land from being subdivided and developed. Wildlife-friendly fence modifications are also underway here, allowing for easier animal crossings. The widespread implementation of such projects, along with others like wildlife overpasses on highways, can help the continuation of these migrations as they have existed for thousands of years.



Photo credit: Chris Montgomery

## Born to Run

American Pronghorn evolved in the open landscapes of western North America. They are the only remaining species in the endemic Antilocapridae family. Pronghorn are the fastest land animal in North America, reaching speeds of up to 60 miles an hour. Jumping, however, is not one of their strengths. Unlike elk and moose, pronghorn more readily crawl under a fence than attempt to jump over it. This makes them particularly challenged by fences.

Fences are a ubiquitous part of the landscape in the American West, where there is estimated to be over 600,000 miles of fencing. Wildlife-friendly fences can help wildlife navigate through this intricate maze. One example involves replacing the bottom wire of a barbed-wire fence with a smooth wire and raising it a few inches allows pronghorn and other wildlife to pass safely underneath. It is, of course, a large task to replace miles and miles of fence, but it can make a big difference for pronghorn and other wildlife moving through.



## Meet the Artists-in-Residence: Clara and Rosalie Haizlett



Clara and Rosalie Haizlett are sisters who grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. Clara is a multimedia storyteller. Using film, photography, and writing, Clara tells stories that connect people and landscapes. Her freelance work has included stories for the NPR member station Virginia Public Media as well as West Virginia Public Broadcasting. She has produced short films covering topics that include accessibility in outdoor recreation and women continuing the tradition of hide tanning in Appalachia. She has also produced a podcast called Sandstone that explores cross-culture connections between Appalachia and the Middle East. Clara and Rosalie worked together to co-produce a multimedia series on American Ginseng in Appalachia for the 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.



Rosalie is an illustrator who specializes in creating captivating hand-rendered visuals that celebrate the natural world. By illustrating the places and creatures that often go unnoticed, her goal is to remind viewers of the amazing intricacy and complexity of our planet. In recent years, Rosalie was the Artist-in-Residence at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and with the National Audubon Society. Her illustration clients include the Smithsonian and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Rosalie is also an educator. She teaches watercolor & field sketching workshops in schools, national parks, REI stores and online through the Skillshare platform. Her first book, *Watercolor in Nature: Paint Woodland Wildlife and Botanicals with 20 Beginner-Friendly Projects*, will be published by Page Street Publishing Co. in November 2021.

This sister duo joined us this summer for a two-week art residency. During their stay, they collaborated on a project that will end up being a short documentary film exploring their journey to deepen their personal connections to nature in an unfamiliar ecosystem. They hope to inspire others to intimately interact with the natural world in ways that are more meaningful than taking a photo at the top of a summit.

## Apply to be an Artist-in-Residence!

Applications are now open for the 2022 Artist-in-Residence Program. This program offers dedicated artists a supportive and transformational environment to further their creative development. In a remote setting dedicated to the historical integrity of the land and the preservation of natural habitat and wildlife, artists can experience unencumbered time to allow for thoughtful reflection and development of their work.

The Artist-in-Residence Season begins on June 15th and ends on October 1st. Find the application and more information on our website.

<https://taft-nicholson.utah.edu/artist-in-residence/index.php>



Artwork by Rosalie Haizlett