
YELLOWSTONE BEFORE & AFTER

Photos Collected and Captioned by Charles E. Kay, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION:

Prior to 1968, the National Park Service contended that an unnaturally large elk population had built up in the Yellowstone area during the turn of the century, severely damaging the Park's northern winter range and willow communities. Today, however, Park biologists are questioning the reality of any significant population buildup or vegetation changes due to ungulates. They now believe large numbers of elk (12,000-15,000) have wintered on the Park's northern range for thousands of years and

hypothesize that if human influence is removed from the system, ungulates in Yellowstone will "naturally regulate" their own numbers without significant change to vegetation. Some experts disagree, including Dr. Charles Kay of Smithfield, Utah, who reveals through these photographs significant damage to tall-willow communities in Yellowstone Park within the last century -- damage caused, he believes, by "unnatural" growth of ungulate populations. (See page 33 for more about Dr. Kay.)



- 1949

Heavily browsed willows along the west edge of Round Prairie, Pebble Creek Valley, Yellowstone National Park.

National Park Service photo (49-331)

(Photos continue on page 34)

Same area, 1988 -

Note the near-complete decline of willows in the past four decades. Numerous springs and seeps still can be found in this area, suggesting that climatic change or lack of water is not primarily responsible for the observed change in plant communities. In all probability, the willows were killed by repeated ungulate browsing.

Photo by Charles E. Kay (2976-19A) June 21, 1988



YELLOWSTONE: BEFORE & AFTER

(Continued from page 32)



- 1896 or 1897

A tall-willow community in the lower Soda Butte Valley on Yellowstone's northern range (viewed northeast).

Photo courtesy A.E. Bradley Collection (72-158),
Mansfield Library,
University of Montana, Missoula



Same area, 1988 -

Note the disappearance of tall willows.

Photo by Charles E. Kay 2976-15A, June 21, 1988.



- 1893

Tall-willow communities in Yancy's Hole on Yellowstone's northern range.

Photo courtesy Haynes Foundation Collection, (H-3080)
Montana Historical Society, Helena.



Same area, 1988 -

Note the disappearance of tall-willow communities, less than 100 years later.

Photo by Charles E. Kay (3051-12 and 3051-13)
August 20, 1988.

About Dr. Charles Kay

Charles E. Kay of Smithfield, Utah holds a Bachelors degree in Wildlife Biology and a Masters degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana, along with a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from Utah State University. He has conducted extensive research on wildlife and natural resource policy issues in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, including analysis of grizzly and black bear management, wolf reintroduction, the 1988 wildfires, bison and elk management, the influence of environmental organizations, the use and misuse of science in support of agency management, and media coverage of Yellowstone issues. He is widely published in these areas and others and was a speaker at the joint meeting in December of the Montana Wool Growers, Public Lands Council and Montana Stockgrowers Association on the subject of livestock/big game grazing balance. ◊

1ST PICK BULL SALE

Wednesday, February 5, 1992 - 1:00 p.m.

Baird Angus will be offering 50 yearling Angus bulls for sale Wednesday, February 5, 1992 at 1:00 p.m.

These calves will be sired by Kendall Kustomizer, Baird's Kontinental, T L A Nuggett 916, McCord and others.

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Kendall Kustomizer

For more information on the cattle sale or wintering, contact:

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(406) 473-2293

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Friday, February 21, 1992

St. Onge Livestock, St. Onge, South Dakota • 1:30 pm MST

MRNAK HEREFORDS

For Catalog and Information, contact:

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Jim: (701) 574-3124 • Wayne: (701) 574-3172 • Terry: (701) 574-3193

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CATTLE BUYERS CALENDAR OF SALES

FEBRUARY '92

5	Baird Angus, At the Ranch, Judith Gap
5	Nelson Livestock Simmental, Baker
8	Felton Angus, At the Ranch, Big Timber
13	Begger's Diamond V/Krechlau Simmentals, At the Ranch, Wibaux
14	Vescovi Polled Herefords, Billings Livestock Commission
21	Mrnak Herefords, St. Onge Livestock, St. Onge, South Dakota
22	Tomahawk Limousin, Public Auction Yards, Billings
25	Big Sky Angus, Lavina
26	101 Ranch (Black Simmental), Baker Livestock Auction

MARCH '92

4	E7 Angus, Bear Paw Livestock, Chinook
5	Mussard Bull Development Center, Beaverhead Livestock Auction, Dillon
7	101 Ranch (Black Simmental) Blackfoot Livestock Auction, Blackfoot, Idaho
7	Winkonley Cattle Co., Montana Livestock Auction, Butte
3	Apex Angus Inc., Valier (New location)
9	Beartooth International, At the Ranch, Columbus
11	Hyline Connection (Angus/Red Angus), Flesch Bull Development Center, Shelby
12	Kicking Horse Ranch (Gelbvieh), Western Livestock Auction, Great Falls
13	Leland Red Angus, Sidney Livestock Market
18	Duncan Ranch Co. (Hereford), Joplin
18	Jolly Rogers Angus, Belt
19	Pete Knutson Ranch (Hereford & Angus), At the Ranch, Clyde Park
24	Twelve Mile Farms/Mantua Farms (Shorthorn), Miles City Livestock Comm.
27	Glory B Angus/Muir Angus, Robbins Livestock Auction, Missoula
30	Coleman Limousin, Robbins Livestock, Missoula

APRIL '92

7	Diamond Bar Ranch (Gelbvieh), Midland Bull Test, Columbus
18	AC Ranch (Charolais), Western Livestock Auction, Great Falls

Publication Schedule for 1992 - 6 issues

Spring: January/February, March, April • Fall: October, November, December
(Reservations for advertising are due the first of the month preceding)

ON OUR COVER: "Thirty below at Avon" by Mike Logan, Montana photographer and poet. *(See a sample of his poetry on page 27.)*