

March 2022



Dear Club Members,

On March 1st, 1872 Yellowstone National Park was established. 150 years ago this was the first park of its kind in the world. The Yellowstone National Park Protection Act was signed in to law by President Ulysses S. Grant, and gave legal protection to over 2 million acres of land.

The park itself was created with remarkable speed, the first formal exploration of the area was carried out in 1869, and then a more thorough record of this landscape was done by the Washburn-Langford-Doane expedition in 1870, and then in 1871 government geologist Ferdinand Hayden led a group which included pioneering photographer William Jackson and Thomas Moran a landscape artist. These two men made a visual record of what they saw, and these images, when viewed by the US Congress, were enough to convince politicians that this land needed protection.

It should go without saying that these men did not “discover” this area. Native Americans had been hunting and living in this land for at least the past 11,000 years. Kiowa, Blackfeet, Cayuse, Coeur d'Alene, Shoshone, Nez Perce, and other tribes are all known to have used the land now protected by the Park, but in 1872 they were seen as a threat to the purpose of the park, it was believed their presence would deter tourists. The early park rangers repeatedly moved on native people, and in 1886 the US Army, who had assumed control of the park would use violence against any Indian found in the park. During the 20th century park officials would sometimes use surrounding Indian groups for ceremonial purposes to increase tourism, but tribe members had no rights to access the lands that they had traditionally used for generations. Even now, members of ‘affiliate tribes’ can enter the park for traditional purposes without paying the entrance fee, though their activities are severely restricted.

The park brochure still says “When you watch animals in Yellowstone, you glimpse the world as it was before humans.” ignoring the fact that the animals in Yellowstone have been hunted by humans for thousands of years, we know that the Clovis people would have hunted mammoth in the land where the park now stands. The park is also one of the best sources of Obsidian, this volcanic rock gives the sharpest edge of any natural substance on earth, and native people have mined this, and many other minerals in the land that is now the park. One Shoshone group known as the Sheepeaters seldom left the current park boundaries, because they were able to harvest bighorn sheep year-round.

For the blend of fibre this month I tried to create something American... which is a little bit of a challenge. Thankfully it's possible to buy Ingeo Corn fibre. This is a manmade viscose that uses corn husks as its source of cellulose. In contrast to the huge variety of sheep breeds here in the much smaller UK, there are very few sheep breeds that have their origin in the USA, but one is the Romeldale. This breed was created in the early 1900's by crossing Romney rams to Rambouillet ewes. The breeding focuses on created large sheep, with a soft fine fleece that would be a true dual-purpose sheep, providing fleece and meat. Sadly it's not fibre you can get here in the UK

(though both it, and the subtype of CVM are delightful to spin), so the blend this time contains both of the ancestors of the Romeldale.

The colour of the fibre tried to pay homage to the stunning natural scenery and the yellow stone that gives the park its name, inspired by the paintings of Thomas Moran, that convinced congress this area needed protection.

Happy Spinning

Katie

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label

25% Ingeo Corn

12.5% Mulberry Silk

12.5% Rambouillet

12.5% Kent Ropmney

37.5% Merino

Further Reading-

The naive people who used the land now known as Yellowstone-

<https://www.usgs.gov/observatories/yvo/news/land-burning-ground-history-and-traditions-indigenous-people-yellowstone>

<https://www.intermountainhistories.org/items/show/344>

<https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/native-history-yellowstone-national-park-created-on-sacred-land>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lost-history-yellowstone-180976518/>

History of the Park

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/historyculture/yellowstoneestablishment.htm>

<https://www.yellowstonepark.com/park/history/the-history-of-yellowstone-national-park/>

William Henry Jackson

<https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/william-henry-jackson-foremost-photographer-american-west>

<https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/william-henry-jackson>

Thomas Moran

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/thomas-moran.htm>

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Paintings_by_Thomas_Moran