

***The Buffalo Jump
Called Chugwater
and an Irrigation
Pivot near Wheatland,
Wyoming, 1991***

gelatin silver print on
paper

H. 15.75 x W. 18.25
inches

Group I

**Emmet Gowin
b. 1941**



Looking Questions

What do you see? Look
for shapes, lines, and
textures.

What do you think this is?
Where could it be?

Is it a real place or an
imaginary one? Why do
you think so?

How do you think the
artist made this
photograph?

Why would Gowin make
this photograph?

Vocabulary

Buffalo jump
Center-pivot irrigation
Concentric circles
Crop circle
Polygon

Art Activities

- Use colored construction paper to cut out shapes similar to those in *The Buffalo Jump*. Recreate the photograph using the shapes, then try rearranging them in new ways. Also try cutting out the same shapes in black, white, and gray and placing them in the same arrangements. Compare the black, gray, and white versions to the color versions.
- Create a bird's-eye view/aerial map of your school's neighborhood. Use color to indicate different areas of the neighborhood and create a key to explain the colors.
- This aerial-view photograph makes the earth below look like an abstract arrangement of lines and shapes. Create your own abstract pictures based on real things by taking close-up photographs of common objects or by cropping magazine pictures. Describe how these objects change and become abstract by zooming in for close-up views and by cropping.
- Look at and discuss map paintings by Marlene McGuire (www.marlenemcguire.com/index.php). Compare them to *The Buffalo Jump*. Use Google Earth to find and print an aerial-view photograph of your school or home. Create an aerial-map painting based on the photograph, using a variety of colors and simplified shapes.

National Standards: NA-VA.K-4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5; NA-VA.5-8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5.

Language Arts Activities

- Investigate Native American legends about buffalo. In small groups, write and perform a short play based on one of the legends.
- Use Google Earth to look up the address of your home or your school. Write a description about what you see. How does it feel to look at your neighborhood from a distant vantage point?
- Read aloud and discuss *Where the Buffaloes Begin* by Olaf Baker. As a class, create a story map. Then, retell your story to a partner or to a reading buddy in another class.
- Discuss the illustrations in *Where the Buffaloes Begin* by Olaf Baker. Use the book and the photograph by Emmet Gowin to write a story from the point of view of a buffalo.
- Research buffalo jumps as used by Native Americans. When were they used? Write a persuasive essay stating why you think these were or were not a good way of hunting.

National Standards: NL-ENG.K-12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5.

Math Activities

- Identify shapes in the photograph. Discuss what makes a shape a polygon, or not. Then, classify the shapes as polygons and nonpolygons.
- Find the concentric circles in *The Buffalo Jump*. Use a compass to draw a circle with a radius of two inches. Then, draw three more circles, using the same center and increasing the radius by half an inch each time. Calculate the diameter of each new circle, then check the actual measurement with a ruler. Repeat the process, choosing your own measurements.
- Study the rectangular shapes of the fields in the upper left-hand corner of the photograph. Draw different rectangles that have the same area (e.g., 24 centimeters). Cut out the shapes and arrange them in a pleasing composition, named for the common number (e.g., “24” for 24 centimeters).

National Standards: NM-GEO.PK-2.1; NM-GEO.3-5.1, 5.4; NM-MEA.3-5.1, 5.2; NM-ALG.3-5.4.

Social Studies Activities

- Go to www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/swan.html to read about the Hayden Expedition’s travels through Chugwater, Wyoming, during the 1870s. Using the entries and photographs, imagine that you are a child on the expedition and write several journal entries about your trip.
- Research the use of buffalo jumps. Write an essay to explain what they were, when they happened, and why they were important to the survival of Native Americans living in what is now the state of Wyoming.
- Landscape photographs have been used to promote land preservation; e.g., Carlton Watkins’s photographs of Yosemite and William Henry Jackson’s photographs of Yellowstone helped get those areas designated as national parks (see www.nps.gov/aboutus/history.htm). Research Bucks County parks at www.buckscounty.org/government/departments/parksandrec/index.aspx and choose one that you think should be preserved. If possible, invite a ranger to speak to your class about the park. Use information you gather to create a poster about preserving this park for future generations.

National Standards: NSS-US.H.5-12.4, 12.7; NSS-US.H.K-4.3, NSS-G.K-12.3, 12.5, 12.6.

Technology/Graphic Arts Activities

- Use a digital camera to take pictures of a favorite object from different vantage points; e.g., at eye level, from below, or from above. Create a photo essay by importing your photos into a word processing program and displaying them side-by-side. Write captions below your photos and give your presentation a title.
- Compare Gowin’s photography techniques and use of perspective in *The Buffalo Jump* to those used by Ansel Adams. Select a photograph by Adams (www.anseladams.com) and use a Venn diagram for the comparison. Discuss your results and the following question: How might these artists’ work change our treatment of the earth?

National Standards: NT.K-12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.5.

Compare and Contrast

View the environmental artworks of Christo and Jeanne-Claude and read a 2002 interview with them (go to www.christojeanneclaude.net/ and click on *About the Artists*). Read Emmet Gowin’s biography in this binder. Compare and contrast the goals and objectives of these artists.

Cultural Connections

Find the center-pivot irrigation system in *The Buffalo Jump*. Compare pivot irrigation farming in the United States with terrace farming used throughout Asia.

Contemporary Connections

Emmet Gowin’s photographs present visual evidence of how humans have changed or damaged the surface of the earth. Investigate how humans have contributed to other changes in the natural environment, using *An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming* by Al Gore (2007 children’s version, recommended for grades 5 through 8) as a starting point. What can children do to help protect the environment?

At the Michener

Compare *The Buffalo Jump* with *Volcano from the Air* by Diane Burko. How are these two aerial perspectives similar and different? Consider the medium, color, and size of each artwork.

