

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: MARSHA KARLE

By Stephen Camelio

Marsha Karle's new collection of Yellowstone watercolor notecards, which include natural history notes by author Paul Schullery, not only capture the landscape and wildlife of America's first national park, but they also serve as a glimpse into the artist's life. You see, before she became a full-time painter, Karle spent 15 years working and living in Yellowstone, where, in 1988, she met Schullery, her husband since 1996.

Since retiring from the National Park Service in 2004, Karle has become well known for her wildlife and nature paintings and drawings. Her art has been included in numerous national shows as well as in the five books she has collaborated on with her husband. From her studio in Bozeman, Montana, Karle took the time to chat with *Discovery* about her art and life—and the connection between the two.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED PAINTING?

I didn't get into art until I was in Yellowstone, met my husband, and we started spending time outdoors. He loves to sit on a hill and look for grizzly bears, but my attention span was not nearly as long as his, so I started doodling and, later, drawing and painting. Then, about 1993, I took some classes, including some at the Yellowstone Association Institute, and it developed from there.



Photo: Paul Schullery

HOW DID THE INSTITUTE'S CLASSES HELP YOU?

The classes at the Institute are great, especially for beginning artists. They will help you with suggestions for what supplies and materials to use. And actually getting out there with someone guiding you through the process is very helpful. Every time you take a class you progress in leaps and bounds in terms of learning about things and expressing yourself and creating your own style.

WHAT'S YOUR PAINTING PROCESS?

I'm not a photographer but I work from photos. I like the process of figuring out what I am going to paint, how I am

going to paint it, and then designing it. It is not like I copy a photograph. When I paint a grizzly bear, I don't paint every little piece of fur. I do more an impressionistic look to get the feel of the bear. I am looking for shapes, shadows, and light in order to help me describe what I am painting and express my love of nature.

HAS PAINTING CHANGED HOW YOU LOOK AT NATURE?

Yes, what affects me is that now I look for colors. The sky looks blue, but there are really a million different colors. I'll go through the exercise of describing to myself what colors I am actually seeing. Painting has made me look closer and more critically at what I am seeing, and I try to define it to myself, so that I am able to paint something that will represent it.

HOW IS IT WORKING WITH YOUR HUSBAND?

It's a real give and take. I can paint to his words or he can write to my pictures. It works both ways. We love working together and exploring ideas and bouncing things off each other. The notecards are special because Paul's notes are very fun and personalize them for us and give people a little view into our lives.



MARSHA KARLE'S PRINTS AVAILABLE FROM THE PARK STORE!

6" x 13" Prints—each mounted on 8" x 15" matte

Price: \$48.00 **YA Member Price: \$40.80**