

CONSERVATION FROM HERE

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAVELING EXHIBITION 2018-19

Conservation from Here is a traveling exhibition with accompanying educational programs synthesizing art and science. It was inspired by US President and landmark conservationist Theodore Roosevelt (TR), includes rare historical artifacts from his life, and features the work of Joseph Rossano, one of the world's foremost artists combining art and science to inspire discussion that effects change.

It remarks on historic moments in conservation including the formation of the National Park Service (NPS), whose recent 100th Anniversary prompted development of this exhibit. It also examines TR's now century-old vision for and promise of conservation that is now inspiring a new generation to revere and conserve animals and their natural habitats.



In this regard, *Conservation from Here* offers much more than a history-steeped retrospective. It also lights the way for the next 100 years of the NPS as well as the future, science-driven conservation of all species, including our own.

Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, the Oyster Bay Historical Society, and Rossano Studio together invite you to host this landmark exhibit for the next leg of its journey following completion of the inaugural nine-month run in May 2018.

This one-of-a-kind multimedia experience is currently installed in the galleries and on the lawns of two venues on New York's Long Island: Theodore Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill home (National Historic Site), and the gallery space at nearby Oyster Bay Historical Society. Plus, several families in the herd recently began the migration by traveling to the lawn of the National Mall at the foot of the U.S. Capitol building for an exclusive event on Earth Day, April 22, 2018.

You and your venue could be the next to forward and amplify this compelling message of conservation first championed by naturalist and citizen scientist Theodore Roosevelt, our 26th President, and in doing so increase audience visitation, revenues, community engagement, and high regard for your organization.

We welcome the opportunity to adapt this expansive exhibit to suit your unique audience, exposing all to the understanding that for each of us conservation begins wherever "here" might be ... a moment in time ... a longstanding or newly formed perspective ... a physical place we inhabit or otherwise hold dear. *That place could very well be yours.*

For more:

ConservationFromHere.org
JosephRossano.com

Also see the available visual companion:
[Highlights of the Traveling Exhibition \(PDF\)](#)

THEODORE “ROOSEVELT ELK”

Conservation from Here originates at the home of the conservation movement’s most historically recognized champion, Theodore Roosevelt (TR). It honors his legacy as a hunter-conservationist through the convergence of science, history, and contemporary artwork by artist Joseph Rossano.

The exhibit centers on what are commonly referred to as Roosevelt Elk (*Cervus elaphus roosevelti*) named after Roosevelt by C. Hart Merriam, himself a celebrated naturalist and a former division Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



At the World’s Columbian Exposition (aka the Chicago World’s Fair) in 1893, Roosevelt and Merriam discussed the differences between elk from the Great Plains and elk from the Olympic Mountains in the Pacific Northwest. Merriam later recalled this conversation with Roosevelt and in 1897 credited him with identifying the Olympic elk as a distinct subspecies.

Merriam named the Olympic elk after Roosevelt writing, “It is fitting that the

noblest deer of America should perpetuate the name of one who, in the midst of a busy public career, has found time to study our larger mammals in their native haunts.”

During his presidency, Roosevelt first attempted to create a National Elk Reserve in the Olympic Mountains of Washington State to protect the Roosevelt Elk but was prevented by Congress. In 1909, at a time when the Roosevelt Elk herd had shrunk so dramatically that its numbers were nearing extinction levels, he leveraged the Antiquities Act to create Mount Olympus National Monument. This protected the critical habitat of the elk from hunting, timbering, and extraction. Today, tens of thousands of people visit descendants of those elk every year.

EXHIBIT INSTALLATIONS

The historical significance of Theodore Roosevelt’s legacy coupled with the visual and emotional enticement of Rossano’s art leads viewers to the understanding that conservation begins, for each of us, wherever we are in our understanding and perspective ... as well as wherever we are physically and geographically, with nature in sight, under foot, and all around. In short, wherever our “here” might be.

In the context of Roosevelt’s highly documented love and respect for animals, *Conservation from Here* visualizes and articulates how he came to define, embrace, and champion conservation. Through the visual, spatial, and tactile qualities of Rossano’s art, it also explores and comments on our collective future and the critical importance of maintaining biodiversity for the preservation of all species.

The traveling exhibit comprises three seemingly divergent but inseparably themed installations:

- Lawn (Spectacle) – Herd of 200 Elk Sculpted from Recycled Alcoa Aluminum
- Gallery 1 (Historical) – Paintings of Rifle Engravings on Historically-Sourced Wood
- Gallery 2 (Visionary) – Trophy Room Replica Sculptures & Species/DNA Photography



Lawn Installation – Elk Herd

Theodore Roosevelt is long remembered for his porch-side chats at his Sagamore Hill home. They were attended by hundreds of listeners who crowded a hill overlooking Oyster Bay Cove.



These chats undoubtedly addressed conservation, the National Forest Service and other topics, including his championing the suffragettes who also congregated on this historic lawn. The exhibition honors those talks, and topics that remain critically important today.

On that same ground, 200 sculptures of Roosevelt Elk, many of them eight feet in length and all from recycled aluminum donated by Alcoa, appear to be waiting for TR to step out and share his vision with them.

They embody the spirit of conservation TR

lived and inspired, and again remind us of its necessity and promise. Further, as the vast majority of them are female, they give a subtle nod to TR's having been a great and outspoken champion of women's rights.



Their shiny metal forms reflect their natural surroundings as well as visitors who, in turn, are challenged to reflect on their personal relationship with conservation, guided by the larger exhibit's exploration of the science and history of the movement to date.





Importantly, as this exhibit has been designed to serve as a real-world model of conservation awareness, much of it has been produced from post-consumer recycled materials. The elk forms were in fact created from recycled aluminum generously donated by Alcoa Corporation. In that light, the elk are destined for return to the smelter, effectively completing their own circle of life, with their constituent elements being recycled and even upcycled into future uses.

Gallery Installation – Rifle Engravings

In Sagamore Hill’s Old Orchard Museum, which was once Theodore Roosevelt Jr.’s home, TR’s prized Winchester 1876 rifle is on display and with a focus on its engraved depictions of antelope, deer, elk and bear. Rossano has painted these images in large-scale on veneers cut from a tree planted by Roosevelt. In a unique stroke of artistry, he rendered these iconic North American game animals in pigment he made from that same tree’s bark.



The American buffalo (*Bison bison*) above serves as an example of the treatment Rossano employed to create these images from those that began their lives as engravings on one of Roosevelt's most prized Winchester rifles.

Alongside these panels, viewers at the Sagamore Hill exhibition currently find artifacts from Roosevelt's personal collection, including his iconic pith helmet, which had not been publically displayed prior to the *Conservation from Here* exhibition. Many of the other accompanying artifacts were created by his own hands, with others gifted from heads of state, and each further emphasizes the President's unique reverence for animals as both a hunter and conservationist.



Gallery Installation – Trophy Room & DNA Barcoding Science



On exhibit at partner institution, the Oyster Bay Historical Society, viewers find a room filled with replica game trophies and furniture mimicking the great North Room at Sagamore Hill.

This facsimile of the historic venue (photo of Roosevelt home inspiration at left) has been executed by Rossano with trophy heads and furniture at actual life-size but in monochrome, black and white, and with each animal head and skin covered in crushed crystal glass.



These represent the early and still common approaches of most museum naturalists—capturing, preserving and examining animal specimens so they can be identified primarily by their shapes and anatomies, things that can be seen with the eye.



Juxtaposing this colorless rendition of Roosevelt's trophy room are brightly colored photographic depictions of creatures native to Sagamore Hill's Long Island surrounds.



Collected, sequenced, and cataloged by school children, their vibrantly colored DNA sequences and photographs provide a dramatic visual counterpoint to the neighboring stark white trophy heads and skins of long-deceased animals.



Much like Roosevelt—indeed walking in his footsteps—these students are today’s citizen scientists ... but instead of rifles and nets they are employing some of the most advanced methods and technologies available today.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS

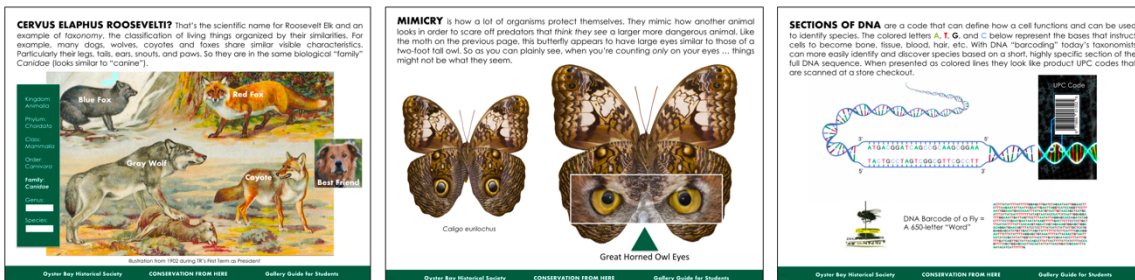
Junior Ranger Guides

Two (2) National Park Service Junior Ranger guides have been developed specifically for the exhibit. One focuses on the paintings of the wildlife engravings and accompanying rare artifacts from TR’s estate. The other focuses on the Roosevelt Elk. Both are educational and interactive primarily for middle school or junior high students, though many adults have also found these to be informative and inspiring.



Citizen Scientist Gallery Guide

Working with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Christian Burks (former President, International Barcode of Life), Colin Mangham (Co-founder, Conservation FWD; Director, Rossano Studio) has led the development of an educational guide for middle, junior high, and high school students and science teachers as an interactive STEAM program to accompany the North Room “Trophy” exhibit.



It begins with the historical context of Roosevelt’s vision for and contributions to conservation, and advances into the leading-edge science of DNA extraction and barcoding that is helping inspire a new generation of citizen scientists. At each successive venue the North Room will be re-adorned with photos of regional organisms and their DNA as collected by school children local to the hosting venue.



Additional Materials

Various supporting materials in addition to the Gallery and Junior Ranger Guides include: Interpretive text panels and quotes that can be printed and wall mounted; promotional flyers; social media assets; dedicated website (ConservationFromHere.org); and customizable Citizen Scientist interactive program kits and curricula made available through partner Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and its DNA Learning Center.

KEY COMPONENTS & ADAPTABILITY

Conservation from Here is a dynamic and venue-adaptable exhibit comprising:

- 200 aluminum Roosevelt Elk silhouettes in aluminum (10 different profiles)
- 8 panels, nearly life-sized, depicting North American game animals originally adorning one of Theodore Roosevelt's prized Winchester rifles
- Historical artifacts TBD to complement the exhibit

Also, a scale replica of Roosevelt's trophy room, complete with:

- Replica furniture including bench and chair
- 2 life-sized American buffalo (bison) trophy heads
- 2 life-sized Roosevelt Elk heads
- 32 life sized elephant tusks in hand-blown glass
- 1 Leopard skin rug (glass)
- 1 Jaguar skin rug (glass)
- + Various works in progress to expand the exhibition

Complementing these trophies are multiple images of their DNA sequences (with Latin species names on "ear tags"), along with 4 large full-color photograph panels showcasing locally collected organisms with their own DNA barcode sequences:

- Mud shrimp
- Sand wasp
- Field cricket
- Bristle worm
- Sea Slater

The exhibit is completely adaptable and can be composed to meet the needs and constraints of most institutions. Our team will work with you to shape this unique exhibition experience specifically for your venue.

THANK YOU

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CONTINUING THE MIGRATION

The elk first migrated from Washington state to Long Island. Now some of them are back on the move and leading the charge. On April 22, 2018, several families from the Sagamore herd migrated (with the aid of a cargo van) to our nation's capital for a large-scale Earth Day event.



Thirty-eight heads of the herd traveled to the National Mall. At the foot of the U.S. Capitol steps, they gathered around a 200-foot tree art installation by Woodchuck USA (official host and partner). Other partners included Eden Reforestation Projects (200 million trees planted).

Media coverage included the Washington Post, MSN, USA Today, NBC and ABC, and with an Associated Press (AP) feed popping the story up in newspapers from Oklahoma City to Shreveport, and from Boston to Bulgaria. Hashtagged social media activity generated significant awareness and support across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds. Event organizers estimate about 2,000 people visited the exhibit over the course of a single day.

A Few Samples of CFH Earth Day Event Media Coverage



SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Conservation takes a team. We're grateful for all of the amazingly supportive organizations and people who have helped bring this exhibit to you. We look forward to adding your organization and venue to the top of the next list....



HOSTING VENUES

US National Park Service
Sagamore Hill National Historic Site
Oyster Bay Historical Society

ORGANIZATIONAL DONORS

Alcoa Corporation
Frederick R. Coudert Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Legacy Partnership
Friends of Sagamore Hill
Skagit Architectural Millwork
Catherine M. Denton Charitable Fund

ACADEMIC & INSTITUTIONAL

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
Pilchuck Glass School
Barcode Long Island
San Diego Barcode of Life
Museum of Glass

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Melissa & Colin Mangham
Lisa & Joseph Rossano

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Photos of organisms in Gallery Installation 2 courtesy DNA Learning Center and photographed by
Chun-hua Yang and Susan Lauter, with large specimen images provided by Ryan Lauter.

Select other photos, graphics, and narrative herein by
Colin Mangham with Joseph Rossano and with the additional support of Conservation FWD.

All artwork by Joseph Rossano.



ABOUT THE ARTIST – JOSEPH ROSSANO

JOSEPH ROSSANO, born to clinicians and research scientists, graduated from Louisiana State University as an artist. His path joined him, via mentorship, collaboration, and exhibition, with renowned artists and institutions including Dale Chihuly, Judy Pfaff, The Pilchuck Glass School, Waterford Crystal, Museum of Glass, the South Australia Museum, Google, and more.



Integrating cutting edge technology and science with his art, Rossano engages and challenges the viewer to reflect upon humankind’s impact on our planet and its varied ecosystems. Much of his youth was spent exploring the North Shore of New York’s Long Island and hiking in the Catskill Mountains. These were formative years that evolved a life focused on creating environmental awareness through art.

Utilizing the spectacle of art to disarm an audience, Rossano opens that audience to truths about man and nature. On the surface, it appears as though he is manufacturing representational art; the reality is quite different. Butterflies made from fighter aircraft; whitewash and tar tell a story of human behavior refusing to disappear; and an 800-year-old tree serves as a historic reference to modern humanity, each a reality employed by the artist.

Through the use of contextually significant materials, Rossano relates an environmental truth hidden in plain sight. Engaging in intensively researched life science theory, he curates a narrative of his own manufacture, exposing viewers to that hidden truth and the theory it supports. Through a mutual desire to protect the natural world, he enlists prominent life scientists to, together, lead viewers to poignant, of the moment theories, represented in three dimensions.

Until a recent shift in scale, the majority of his efforts reflected personal toil, crafted, conceived and researched by Rossano alone. Now, his large-scale installations in the homes of U.S. President’s, and more, expose ever larger audiences to the conceptual matrix surrounding his work and our world. These new works are created in association with other artists, corporations, and individuals, all willing to donate their time and materials to the causes he addresses and messages they deliver—a model of community collaborating for a cause.

The scientist, the environmentalist, and the conservationist constantly face the challenge of convincing an audience to care about their work, cause, etc. Although artists face the same challenges, more often than not, it is an ego driven exercise. Rossano has chosen to make makes things for no profit, that are about something bigger than ourselves, about individuals and creatures—whether they be human or other—that need our help.

Rossano now lives and works 65 miles north of Seattle, with his home and studio nestled in the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest.

More at www.JosephRossano.com

