

The Ecology of Aspen
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During the field season of 1972, all the exclosures in the Jackson Hole area were visited and data were collected on fenceline contrasts whether they involved the aspen community or not. As has been the case for several years, data show that the aspen community is severely altered in the Jackson Hole area but will recover under protection. Less obvious, but perhaps more important from the point of view of watershed damage, the bluebunch wheatgrass, also under winter pressure from elk, has changed on south slopes to a thickspike wheatgrass community.

Because exclosures tend to recreate climatic climaxes which contrast sharply with zootic disclimaxes, exclosures are being removed from Grand Teton National Park (two in 1972, one on Berry Creek and one on Blacktail Butte). According to Cole (1971), "interpretations that such exclosures illustrate how things should be in a park would more often than not be confusing artificial with natural conditions." However, under this research program, the thrust of effort will be toward interpretation of the aspen community in balance with the climate and the soil, and deviations from this will be considered asymptotic when caused by such dominant, native ungulates as the elk which are artificially fed on the borders of Teton National Park throughout every winter.

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