



Photo courtesy of Back Country Pictures.

Capturing **Grandeur**

by David Heuring

Crew used a crane to capture footage of a moose crossing Snake River for the Grand Teton National Park visitors' center film, directed by David Vassar and shot by DP Christopher Tufty.

David Vassar specializes in directing films that capture and communicate the delicate beauty of nature. He is currently completing an extraordinary project for the visitors' center at the Grand Teton National Park in northwestern Wyoming. The film will be presented to park visitors in a unique presentation format called a "video river."

High definition projectors will beam the images up from below onto multiple 4-by-15 foot pieces of glass that form part of the floor in the center. Rear projection material sandwiched in the glass will catch and display the projected images.

The images will be seen in an ultra-wide 3.75:1 aspect ratio. "Given the aspect ratio, and the fact that the images must pass through a thick piece of glass, we decided that 35 mm film was required," Vassar says. "We needed the highest image quality with as many pixels as possible."

Vassar envisioned the unusual design of the "theater" in devising his visual strategy. "If the audience is going to be standing on

the film, it changes the way you frame the film," he says. "As often as possible, we wanted to replicate the point of view of the audience – so we decided to shoot the majority of the film looking straight down."

Vassar and cinematographer Christopher Tufty shot with Kodak VISION2 50D 5201 film, which has an ultra-fine grain. Airplane footage was usually shot at 60 frames per second to smooth out the images. At times they filmed at 100 frames per second at a lower altitude.

The film was converted to video for editing on an Avid system. After editing, the selects were scanned and assembled at 2K resolution, and then output to the unique aspect ratio for HD projection. The HD post-production is being handled at LaserPacific in Los Angeles.

"We find that when it's working, the images start to become impressionistic and abstract," says Vassar. "You're not always sure which way is up or down. The presentation format is so unusual, and the images become more arresting, drawing the viewer in." **HD**