



P.O. Box 117 Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190 \* 406.848.2400 \* [YellowstoneAssociation.org](http://YellowstoneAssociation.org)

Welcome to Yellowstone National Park! If you are a newcomer to the Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits you during each day of exploration. If you are a veteran of Institute programs, you are aware of the many perspectives from which learning can take place in this diverse place. Since its inception in 1976, the Institute has been providing educational programs that offer diverse and in-depth studies of the Yellowstone area, bringing back instructors and participants year after year. We are glad you are able to join us. As Yellowstone National Park's primary partner in education, our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality educational experience and a safe and memorable visit to Yellowstone.

The following information is provided to help you prepare for your program. Please read it thoroughly and call us at 406.848.2400 or email [registrar@yellowstoneassociation.org](mailto:registrar@yellowstoneassociation.org) if you have any questions. Please return your completed health questionnaire at least 30 days prior to your program. We recommend that first-time visitors seek general park information through the National Park Service at 307.344.2107 or [www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell).

**Important information included in this document:**

- Program Overview
- What's Included
- How to Prepare for this Program
- Program Itinerary
- Suggested Reading
- YA Park Store Information
- YA Membership Information
- Code of Ethics
- Cancellation Policy
- Travel Information

**Program Overview: Fall Wolf & Elk Discovery**

The focus of this four-day program will be searching for and learning about wolves and elk on Yellowstone's Northern Range. Mornings will be spent traveling by 14-passenger minibus to strategic viewing points to observe wolves and elk. Meanwhile, the group will encounter many other wildlife species and learn the role they play in the ecosystem and in relation to wolves and elk. Most sightings of wildlife occur at a distance; the Institute will provide high-powered spotting scopes and binoculars for group use. You are encouraged to bring additional scopes and binoculars if you have them. It is very unlikely that you will be close enough for full-frame photographs of wolves, though pleasant scenery and other wildlife species are often captured on camera.

Afternoons will be spent exploring the animals' habitats: traveling on foot to examine tracks and other animal sign. There will be opportunities for field lectures about current research and management of these charismatic species. We'll also see and discuss effects of climate change, as well as the park's efforts towards sustainability. Each evening, you will return to excellent meals, comfortable accommodations, and educational evening programs at the Mammoth Hot Springs hotel. All field activities will be conducted as a group, however, it is fine if you choose not to participate in a day's activities—just let your instructor know your decision in advance.

### What's included?

The *Fall Wolf and Elk Discovery* program includes instruction by an Institute instructor, in-park transportation, four nights lodging, breakfasts, lunches, and dinner on the last evening, as well as a gratuity for all prepaid meals. Any other gratuities, including gratuities for your instructor, are discretionary. Seating for dinner in the Mammoth Dining Room is on a first-come, first-served basis. For more quick and casual fare, the Terrace Grill is open each night as well. The itinerary gives approximate daily return times. If you plan on attending an evening interpretive program, please schedule your dinnertime accordingly.

We look forward to sharing Yellowstone with you!

### How to prepare for this program

#### How fit do you need to be?

This program is rated for hikes up to 3 miles per day with elevation gains of up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking is possible. This is the maximum distance; hikes are often shorter due to changing conditions and group ability. Due to hiking at an elevation of 6000 to 7000 feet, we recommend you begin an exercise program right away if you have not already done so. Participants residing at lower elevations may want to arrive a day early to adjust to the altitude. To learn more about how specific medical conditions can be affected by Yellowstone's environment and our activities, please visit [www.tinyurl.com/yahealth](http://www.tinyurl.com/yahealth)

#### General clothing and equipment list

Much of your time will be spent outdoors and all programs are held rain, snow or shine. ***You should be prepared for a variety of mountain weather conditions and temperatures. Appropriate clothing, equipment and footwear are very important.*** Spring, summer and fall temperatures can range from below freezing in the mornings to 85 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoons. The layered use of garments for protection against the wind, sun and temperature extremes should guide your clothing choices. Loose-fitting layers allow you to maintain a comfortable and dry body as outside temperatures change, and as your own body temperature and moisture output changes with different levels of exertion. Some colder-weather items may not be needed in July or August, but please keep in mind that Yellowstone's weather is unpredictable.

#### Summer clothing:

- Insulating underwear**, capilene, polypropylene, or similar wicking fabric.
- Mid-weight insulating layer**, light, 200-weight synthetic fleece or wool shirt/pullover.
- Heavyweight insulating layer**, wool, down, or heavy-weight fleece jacket, for less-active times.
- Waterproof and windproof outer layer**, lightweight and breathable. Jackets and pants are recommended.
- Short-sleeve shirt**, cotton is okay in summer, but synthetic wicking shirts are ideal.
- Pants**, synthetic hiking pants, lightweight pile/fleece pants or tights or similar. Jeans are not recommended.
- Hats**, both a brimmed sun hat and an insulating hat for cool weather.
- Gloves**, lightweight glove liners and a pair of wool/fleece gloves or mittens.
- Socks**, light wool or synthetic liner sock with heavier wool or synthetic outer sock. The inner-outer sock combination helps prevent blistering, wicks moisture and reduces friction. Cotton socks do not wick moisture and are not recommended.
- Hiking boots**, that provide stability, traction, and comfort. Unless you've consistently hiked in athletic shoes, bring boots that provide ankle support.
- Off-duty shoes**, sandals, athletic shoes, or other leisure footwear.

**Equipment:**

Your instructor will be carrying a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.

- Daypack**, with enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, field guides, etc.
- Water bottle**, one-quart is the minimum. Camelback or similar hydration systems work well in summer but can freeze in winter.
- Sunglasses**
- Sunscreen/lip protector**. Sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly.
- Camera, binoculars**.
- Notebook/pencil**.
- Pocket hand and foot warmers**—recommended November through May.
- Alarm Clock:** Make sure you're ready for early mornings! Not all hotel rooms/cabins have alarm clocks.

**Program Itinerary**

The itinerary is designed to take advantage of the best opportunities in the park, but may be adjusted to adapt to weather conditions, wildlife movements, holidays, and road construction.

**Day 1**

**Welcome and Orientation**

Dinner on your own at Terrace Grill or Mammoth Dining Room

7 p.m.

Orientation in Mammoth Hot Springs (ask hotel front desk staff for location and directions to the orientation room).

Introduction to Yellowstone wolves and elk, program preview, clothing and equipment review, and question and answer session.

Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs

**Day 2**

**Introduction to Wolf and Elk Watching**

Breakfast on your own (with provided coupon)

8 a.m.

Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, and appropriate clothing)

Depart for wildlife watching

Roadside viewing for wolves, elk, and other animals that are most active in the morning

Mid-to-late morning—search for other wildlife species including mountain goats, moose, bison, bighorn sheep, birds, bears, and others

Box lunch in the field (provided)

Possible afternoon hike in wildlife habitat and wildlife field lecture (up to 3 miles round trip)

5 p.m.

Return to Mammoth Hot Springs for free time and dinner on own

Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs

**Day 3**

**Sunrise Wolf and Elk Search**

Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, appropriate clothing)

6 a.m.

Depart for sunrise wildlife watching

Roadside viewing for wolves, elk, and other animals that are most active in the morning

Hot coffee and box breakfast on the bus (provided)

Box lunch in the field (provided)

Possible afternoon hike in wildlife habitat and wildlife field lecture (up to 3 miles round trip)

4 p.m.

Return to Mammoth Hot Springs for free time and dinner on own

Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs

#### Day 4 **More Wolves and Elk**

- 6 a.m. Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, appropriate clothing)  
Depart for sunrise wildlife watching  
Roadside viewing for wolves, elk, and other animals that are most active in the morning.  
Hot coffee and box breakfast in the bus (provided)  
Box lunch in the field (provided)
- 2 p.m. Return to Mammoth
- 5 p.m. Farewell group dinner at Mammoth Hot Springs Dining Room (with provided coupon)  
Overnight at Mammoth Hot Springs

#### **Suggested Reading**

No prior reading is required, but you might want something to occupy the long plane or car ride to Yellowstone. Whether your passion is history, geology, wildlife, or ecology, there's something for everyone. Most publications are available from the Yellowstone Association's online Park Store at [www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/shop](http://www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/shop) or by calling 406.848.2400. Yellowstone Association members receive a 15 percent discount and proceeds go back to the park for education and research.

#### **Wolves**

- Halfpenny, J.C. 2003. *Yellowstone Wolves: In the Wild*. Riverbend Press, Helena, MT. 135 pp. A highly readable and informative look at what we have learned from Yellowstone's wolves since their reintroduction.
- McNamee, T. 1997. *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone*. Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY 354 pp.
- Smith, D.W. and G. Ferguson. 2005. *Decade of the Wolf: Returning the Wild to Yellowstone*. Lyons Press, Guilford, CT. 212 pp.

#### **Elk**

- Geist, V. 1991. *Elk Country*. Northwood Press, Minnetonka, Minnesota (An excellent summary of elk biology and evolution, with wonderful photographs. Highly recommended)
- Houston, Douglas B. 1982. *The Northern Yellowstone Elk: Ecology and Management*. McMillan, New York.

#### **General**

- National Academy of Science. 2002. *Ecological Dynamics on Yellowstone's Northern Range*. National Academy Press. Washington D.C. (Summary of current management issues)
- Pritchard, J. 1991. *Preserving Yellowstone's Natural Conditions: Science and the Perception of Nature*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Schullery, P. 1999. *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness*. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, NY. 338 pp.

#### **Park Stores**

Our Park Stores features more than 900 books, maps and videos to help you plan your visit, along with a wide selection of shirts, hats and other logo items to remind you of your visit to Yellowstone. Yellowstone Association members receive a 15 percent discount on merchandise online or at any of 12 locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support education and research in Yellowstone. Visit: [www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/shop](http://www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/shop)

## **Membership**

Yellowstone Association members directly fund education and research, provide scholarships for teachers and expand programming for underserved youth. Member benefits include a subscription to our magazine *Yellowstone Quarterly*, early registration and discounts for Institute courses and discounts on retail purchases throughout Yellowstone (exclusions apply). If you are not a member of the Yellowstone Association, an introductory subscription (one year) to our magazine *Yellowstone Quarterly* is included with your tuition. For more information about membership, visit: [www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/join](http://www.YellowstoneAssociation.org/join)

## **Code of Ethics**

The Yellowstone Association Institute is committed to demonstrating a high standard of appropriate and ethical behavior in Yellowstone. As a participant in an Institute program, we ask you to adhere to the following Code of Ethics. In addition to the ethics highlighted below, the Institute abides by all National Park Service rules and regulations. We also practice Leave No Trace guidelines for traveling responsibly in the wilderness.

**Observing wildlife:** We will do our best to have as little impact on wildlife as possible. Animals will be observed from a distance, using high-powered spotting scopes to help keep our presence from affecting their behavior. Participants should not expect to get close-up photographs of wildlife. The Institute will adhere to National Park Service regulations by keeping a minimum distance of 25 yards from bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, coyotes and nesting birds and 100 yards from bears and wolves. We will not entice wildlife with food, animal calls or any actions that change their behavior.

**Leave what you find:** It is illegal to remove natural or cultural artifacts (plants, animals, bones, rocks, etc.) from Yellowstone. Institute instructors have permission from the National Park Service to manipulate plants, rocks, bones, etc. for educational purposes and will return them to their natural positions and locations.

**General etiquette:** Institute groups will be considerate of other visitors and respect the quality of their experience. Voices and vehicle sounds carry great distances and affect both wildlife and people—remaining silent or very quiet while watching wildlife lets the sounds of Yellowstone (including wolf howls) prevail.

**Roads and vehicles:** Expect wildlife on the road, and drive at or below the posted park speed limits. When stopping to observe wildlife or other park features, the Institute will move vehicles entirely off the road. If there is no safe pullout available, we will drive to the next safe place and walk back to observe the wildlife. We will not stop in the middle of the road, and should a traffic jam develop as a result of our activities, we will cease the activity.

**Properly dispose of waste:** We will pack out all trash, leftover food and litter. Your instructor will discuss techniques for properly disposing of human waste in the field.

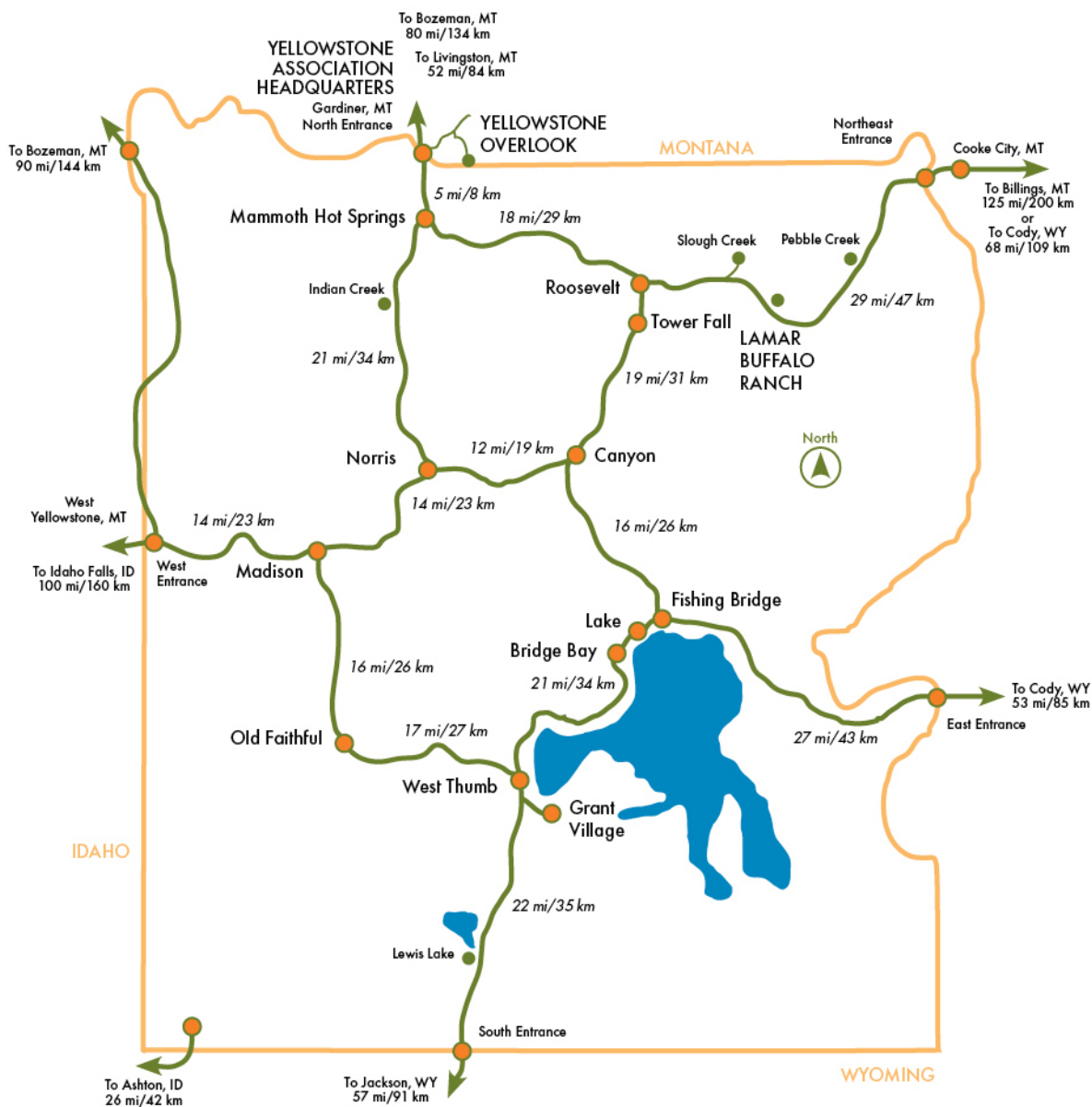
**Traveling lightly:** When hiking or walking in Yellowstone, we will use existing trails and boardwalks. We will follow appropriate techniques when walking off-trail. Walking around muddy or wet places in the trail increases erosion and negatively affects the resource; proper equipment is essential to hiking ethically. Participants should come adequately prepared with the equipment listed for their course and should expect to walk through mud, snow or puddles in the trail.

*Thank you for helping us set a good example in Yellowstone!*

## **Cancellation and Refund Policy**

For packages, 60-day notice is required to receive full refund of your deposit amount. Cancellations made between 30-60 days will result in 50% forfeiture of package cost. Cancellations made within 30 days of arrival result in 100% forfeiture of package cost. We recommend the purchase of travel insurance to help protect you against financial loss if you must cancel or interrupt your trip due to unforeseen circumstances. For more information about travel insurance please ask our representative when booking your reservation.

Travel Information



Plan on extra driving time in the park. The speed limit is 45 mph or lower. There may also be construction delays. Visit [www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm), call the recorded NPS Road Report at 307.344.2117, or contact a visitor center for up-to-date travel information.