



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 Institute programs, you will be amazed at what awaits you during each day of exploration. If you are a veteran of our programs, you will know the many perspectives from which learning can take place in this diverse place. Since its inception in 1976, the Institute has evolved into a respected field school that offers diverse and in-depth study of the Yellowstone area, bringing back participants year after year. We are glad that you are able to join us. As Yellowstone National Park's primary nonprofit partner in education, our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality educational experience and an exciting 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. 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).

To participate in this program, each participant must fill out and sign our health questionnaire and assumption of risk waiver. Registrants receive a link to this form in their confirmation letter which is sent via e-mail. **These forms must be completed and returned at least 30 days prior to your program start date.**

**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: Essential Yellowstone**

The focus of this four-day program will be to explore the heart of Yellowstone and experience its quintessential sights and sounds. The group will travel by 14-passenger minibus to locations throughout the park in search of the best Yellowstone has to offer. This will include wildlife watching in Hayden Valley, walking along the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, and touring the fascinating Yellowstone Volcano. Along the way, your instructor will share in-depth information on Yellowstone's history, management, geology, flora, and fauna. 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 and comfortable accommodations. You will have the opportunity to relax on the shores of Yellowstone Lake, the largest lake above 7000 feet in North America. This historic lodge is not only beautiful and luxurious, but is also frequented by bears which can be viewed from the safety of the facilities. All field activities will be conducted as a group. If you cannot participate in the day's activities, please let your instructor know in advance.

## **What's Included?**

**Essential Yellowstone** includes instruction by an Institute instructor, in-park transportation throughout the program, four nights lodging, all breakfasts and lunches during full program days, one dinner with the instructor, as well as a gratuity for all prepaid meals. Any other gratuities, including gratuities for your instructor, are discretionary. Dining options at Lake include the Lake Hotel Dining Room (reservations required), as well as the cafeteria at Lake Lodge. If you did not make dinner reservations during registration and would like to, please contact Yellowstone National Park Lodges at 866.439.7375. Reservations have been made for you for the final dinner with the instructor at Lake Hotel Dining Room.

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 walks and 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 walking 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 <http://bit.ly/1xx5H8K>.

### **General equipment and clothing 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.

### **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**, so you're on time for the day's activities.
- Flashlight/Headlamp**, a small light for walking to and from your cabin in the evenings and mornings.

**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.

**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 the Lake Hotel Dining room or Lake Lodge Cafeteria

7 p.m.

Meet in Lake Hotel lobby by the fireplace for a walk to the meeting room

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

Overnight at Lake Hotel Cabin

**Day 2**

**The Yellowstone Volcano**

Breakfast on your own (with coupon)

8 a.m.

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

In-depth exploration of geothermal areas (may include walks on boardwalks—up to 3 miles)

Deli lunch in the field

5 p.m.

Return to Lake Hotel

Dinner on your own

Overnight at Lake Hotel Cabin

**Day 3**

**Wildlife Ecology**

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

6 a.m.

Hot coffee and box breakfast in the field

Sunrise wildlife watching (road-based)—search for animals that are most active in the morning

Deli lunch in the field

Wildlife ecology hike

3 p.m.

Return to Lake Hotel

5 p.m.

Dinner with instructor at the Lake Hotel Dining Room (with coupon)

Overnight at Lake Hotel Cabin

**Day 4**

**Wildlife, Waterfalls & History**

Breakfast on your own (with coupon)

- 8 a.m. Meet instructor with your gear for the day (pack, water, and appropriate clothing)  
Sightseeing at the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone  
Deli lunch in the field  
Afternoon hike in the area
- 4 p.m. Return to Lake Hotel  
Dinner on your own  
Overnight at Lake Hotel Cabin

### Suggested Reading

No prior reading is required, but you might want something to occupy your flight or car ride. 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 directly back into the park for education and research.

- Craighead, F.C. Jr. 1994. *For Everything There is a Season: The Sequence of Natural Events in the Grand Teton-Yellowstone Area*. Falcon Publishing, Inc. Helena, MT. 206 pp.
- Haines, A.L. 1977. *The Yellowstone Story: A History of Our First National Park*. Colorado Associated University Press, Vol. 1 - 385 pp. Vol 2 - 543 pp.
- Phillips, M.K. and Smith, D.W. 1996. *The Wolves of Yellowstone*. Voyageur Press, Stillwater, MN 128 pp.
- Schullery, P. 1999. *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness*. First Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, NY. 338 pp.
- Whittlesey, L.H. 1995. *Lost in the Yellowstone: Truman Everts' "Thirty-Seven Days of Peril"*. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.

### Park Stores

Our Park Stores feature 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 financial aid for teachers and help expand programming for underserved youth. Member benefits include a subscription to our magazine *Yellowstone Quarterly*, early registration, 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.

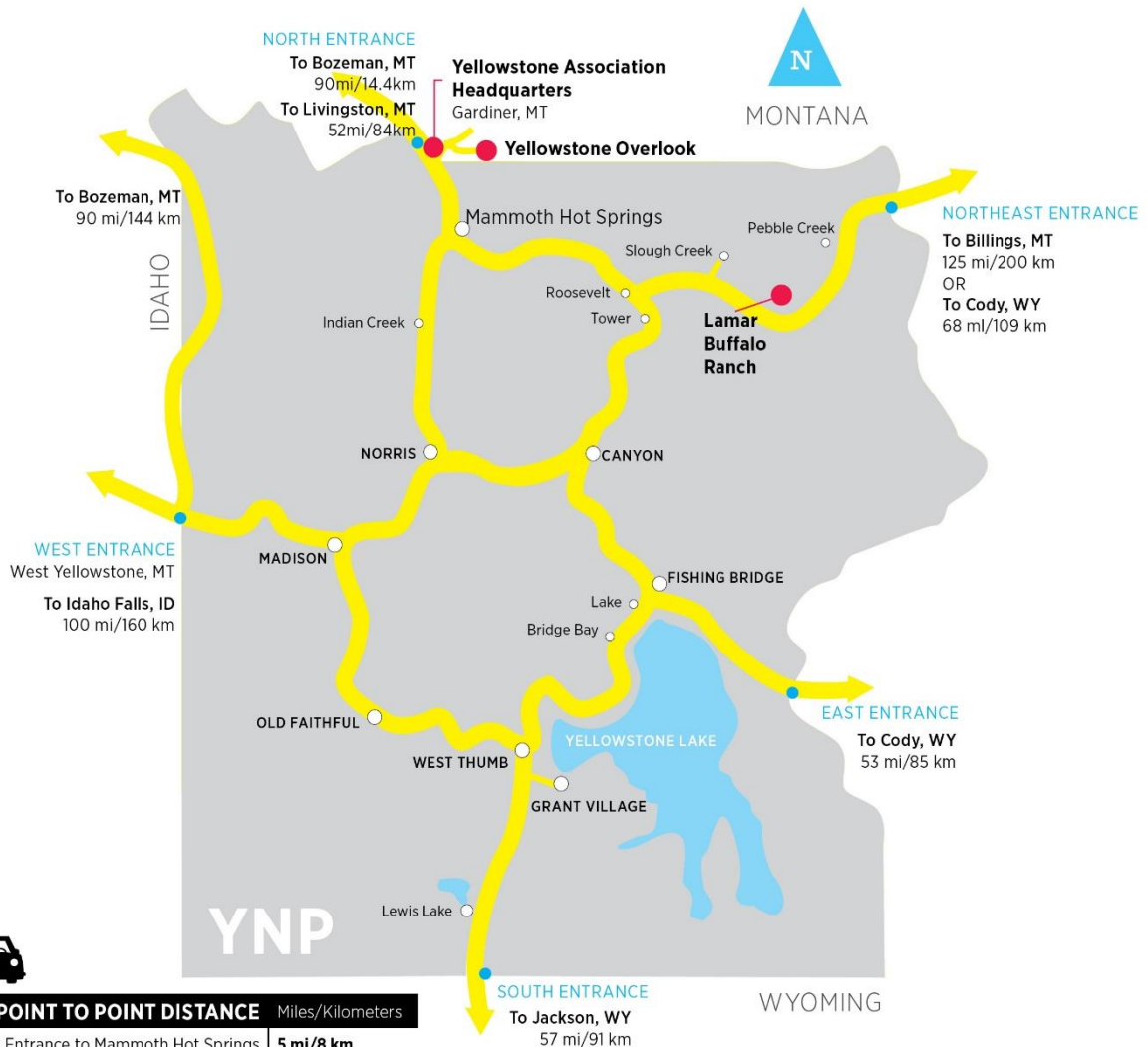
**Traveling lightly:** When hiking or walking in Yellowstone, we will use existing trails and boardwalks. We will follow appropriate techniques when walking off-trail. Walking around muddy or wet places in the trail increases erosion and negatively affects the resource; proper equipment is essential 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 a 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.

 **Yellowstone Map** **YELLOWSTONE ASSOCIATION**



POINT TO POINT DISTANCE	
	Miles/Kilometers
North Entrance to Mammoth Hot Springs	5 mi/8 km
Mammoth Hot Springs to Norris	21 mi/34 km
Norris to Canyon	12 mi/19 km
Norris to Madison	14 mi/23 km
Madison to West Entrance	14 mi/23 km
Madison to Old Faithful	16 mi/26 km
Old Faithful to West Thumb	17 mi/27 km
West Thumb to South Entrance	22 mi/35 km
West Thumb to Bridge Bay	21 mi/34 km
Fishing Bridge to East Entrance	27 mi/43 km
Fishing Bridge to Canyon	16 mi/26 km
Canyon to Tower Falls	19 mi/31 km
Roosevelt to Northeast Entrance	29 mi/47 km
Roosevelt to Lamar Buffalo Ranch	11 mi/17 km
Roosevelt to Mammoth Hot Springs	18 mi/29 km

ELEVATIONS	
	feet/meters
North Entrance	5314 / 1620
West Entrance	6667 / 2032
South Entrance	6886 / 2099
East Entrance	6951 / 2119
Mammoth Hot Springs	6239 / 1902
Old Faithful	7365 / 2254
Grant Village	7733 / 2357
Lake	7784 / 2373
Canyon	7734 / 2357
Roosevelt	6270 / 1911

**OPEN ROADS**

**YA FACILITIES**

**ENTRANCE GATES**

**COMMON POINTS OF INTEREST**

1 mile (mi) = 1.609344 kilometers (km)

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.