

## West Yellowstone & Gallatin Area Ski & Snowshoe Trails



# YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Rev. 11/13

## Trail Descriptions

### West Yellowstone Trails

#### Riverside Trail

Boundary Street to loops: 1 mile (1.6 km)

Downriver loop, full: 3.5 miles (5.6 km)

Downriver loop, short: 2.2 miles (3.5 km)

Upriver loop: 1.5 miles (2.4 km)

Trailhead: east side of Boundary Street at Madison Avenue.

The first mile (1.6 km) is through forest to the loop trail

junctions above the Madison River. The upriver loop (right),

provides panoramic views of the Madison River and the

Gallatin Range. The downriver loop (left), crosses open

forests and meadows along the river. A cutoff trail shortens

the trip by 1.3 miles (2.1 km). Return to the trailhead via the

approach trail. Look for elk, bald eagles, and waterfowl.

The first 2 miles (3.2 km) may be occasionally groomed for

classic ski tracks.

### Gallatin Area Trails

#### Gneiss Creek Trail

14 miles (23 km), one way

Trailhead: 9.5 miles (15.2 km) north of West Yellowstone.

Ski across rolling meadows and through open forests on this

highly-used trail. Trail crosses several creeks – use caution.

Return the same way or ski back along the snow road from

Seven Mile Bridge to West Yellowstone (7 miles /11.3 km).

#### Telamark Meadows

Trailhead: West side of U.S. 191, 18 miles (29 km) north

of West Yellowstone.

No marked trails—several gentle slopes suitable for beginning

through advanced telemark skiers.

## Trail Descriptions

### Big Horn Pass Trail

10 miles (17 km), one way

To Fawn Pass Cutoff: 4.5 miles (7.2 km)

Fawn Pass Cutoff to Big Horn Pass: 6 miles (9.7 km)

Trailhead: 20.5 miles (33 km) north of West Yellowstone.

**Avalanche Danger:** Extreme in the last 2 miles (3.2 km) to

Big Horn Pass.

Cross the Gallatin River about 0.5 miles (0.8 km) east of the

highway—use caution. Trail crosses meadows with little

elevation change from the trailhead to Fawn Pass Cutoff. (The

cutoff trail switchbacks uphill 1 mile (1.6 km) to Fawn Pass

Trail.) The trail then climbs for 6 miles (9.7 km) to Big Horn

Pass. Return the same way.

#### Fawn Pass Trail

11 miles (17.7 km), one way

To Big Horn Pass Cutoff: 5 miles (8 km)

Big Horn Pass Cutoff to Fawn Pass: 6 miles (9.7 km)

Trailhead: 22 miles (35.4 km) north of West Yellowstone.

**Avalanche Danger:** Moderate in the last 6 miles (9.7 km)

to Fawn Pass.

After crossing several fingers of the Gallatin River, the trail

gradually ascends 700 feet (213.4 m) in 5 miles (8 km) to the

Big Horn Pass Cutoff. (The cutoff trail switchbacks downhill

1 mile (1.6 km) to Big Horn Pass Trail.) The trail then climbs

for 6 miles (9.7 km) to Fawn Pass. Return the same way.

#### Bacon Rind Creek Trail

8 miles (12.9 km), one way

Trailhead: West side of U.S. 191, 23 miles (37 km) north of

West Yellowstone.

Trail starts on the north side of Bacon Rind Creek and

continues over flat terrain 2 miles (3.2 km) to the Park

boundary. The trail becomes difficult to follow as it heads

into the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area.

#### Daily Creek Trail

6 miles (9.7 km), one way

Trailhead: 30 miles (48.3 km) north of West Yellowstone.

Trail rises through meadows for 2 miles (3.2 km) to Black

Butte Cutoff (2 miles/3.2 km east to the Black Butte Trail).

The trail continues about 4 miles (6.4 km) to the Sky Rim

Trail and park boundary. The Daily Creek drainage lies in

a snow shadow, resulting in minimal snow cover.

Printed by:

**Xanterra Parks and Resorts**

Authorized Concessioner of the

National Park Service

Phone (307) 344-7311

#### Black Butte Trail

7 miles (11.3 km), one way

Trailhead: 28.8 miles (46.3 km) north of West

Yellowstone.

The trail follows Black Butte Creek with many short,

steep sections, gaining 769 ft (234 m) in elevation between

the trailhead and Daily Creek Cutoff (2 miles/3.2 km)

west to Daily Creek Trail.) Trail climbs for 4 miles (6.4

km) to Big Horn Peak. The last 2 miles (3.2 km) are not

recommended. The trail becomes extremely steep and hard

to follow, and is dangerously exposed.

climbing skins are recommended.

reaches. The last mile of each trail is extremely steep;

Snow cover ranges from sparse to marginal on the lower

east.

(3.2 km) north and Crescent Lake is 2 miles (3.2 km) east.

(Crescent Lake trail junction). Shelf Lake lies 2 miles

(6.4 km) through forests and meadows to the Shelf Lake

the north fork of Specimen Creek, ascending for 4 miles

Trail is not recommended). Follow the trail to the left along

Lake Trail junction on the south (right). (Sportsman Lake

for 2 miles (3.2 km) through rolling forests to the Sportsman

Creek

This popular route follows the north side of Specimen Creek

Trail portion.

**Avalanche Danger:** Moderate to severe on the Shelf Lake

Yellowstone.

Trailhead: 26.5 miles (42.6 km) north of West

8 miles (12.9 km), one way

**Specimen Creek Trail**

and may require you to move slowly when you are out of

breath. Always drink plenty of water.

**Avalanche danger:** avalanches can occur on any slope and hazards will not always be marked. In avalanche-prone areas carry a shovel, avalanche transceiver, probe, and first aid kit—and know how to use them. Cross slopes one at a time, while others watch from safety.

#### Wildlife

**Do not approach wildlife.** Large mammals survive on stored fat and low quality food during winter. Causing them to move will cost them precious calories vital for survival. Park regulations require you to remain *at least* 75 feet (23 m) from bison and other large animals; 300 feet (91 m) from bears and wolves. You are travelling through essential winter habitat. Never approach animals, give them time to move away from you. Travel around a herd, not through it. Always allow animals an escape route through shallow snow or on a packed trail. Pets are not allowed on ski trails or in backcountry areas.

#### Trail Ratings

Trails are rated by the National Park Service with trail ratings specific to Yellowstone National Park. We strongly encourage all skiers to inquire at a visitor center or Xanterra Ski Shop before beginning their first ski trip. Weather conditions may cause icy trails, deep snow, or barren sections, and in some instances make trails difficult to follow, increasing the difficulty of a trail. Trails are not groomed or checked daily.

#### Easiest

Skiers need basic knowledge and limited experience in the diagonal stride, snow plow, and side stepping. Trails may have short downhill and uphill stretches.

#### More Difficult

Skiers need to be able to ski varied terrain requiring turning, snow plowing, herringboning, and diagonal stride.

#### Most Difficult

Skiers need to be experienced. Trails are hazardous and terrain is frequently extreme. Turns are often sharp and linked together with no room to snow plow or herringbone.

#### National Park Service

P.O. Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

#### For emergencies, dial 911

#### Welcome

Yellowstone offers a variety of enjoyable and challenging trails for skiers. All trails are marked but may be untracked. On some trails, the difficult sections can be avoided by skiing part way in and returning by the same route. The quality of your experience will depend upon the amount of planning and preparation you do prior to your trip. We suggest that you stop at a visitor center or ski shop and discuss your trip. The staff will be happy to provide current information on weather, trail, snow conditions, and alert you to any special winter hazards.

Some backcountry trails are suitable for travel, but should only be attempted by experienced parties with appropriate equipment. Overnight camping requires a free backcountry use permit which must be obtained in person from Mammoth or Old Faithful visitor centers, or West and South entrance stations. Wood fires are not permitted.

#### Trail Etiquette

- Do not snowshoe or walk directly on ski tracks.
- Skiers/snowshoers going uphill yield to those going downhill.
- Fill in depressions in the snow after falling to reduce hazards to others.
- Ski within your ability. If you find the trail too difficult, turn back

#### Safety

Trails may have natural hazards such as animals, avalanches, thermal features, downed trees, steep slopes and cliffs. When skiing near thermal areas, stay on marked trails. Approaching thermal features is dangerous and prohibited. The snow in these areas is often icy and what appears to be bare ground may be a thin crust over boiling water.

Winter weather in Yellowstone changes rapidly and can be severely cold and windy. Wear proper clothing layers. Watch yourself and other members of your party for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. For your safety, always ski with someone else. Tell someone where you are going, by what route, and when you plan to return. Carry extra clothing, food, water, map and compass, matches, flashlight, and a whistle.

Consider elevation when deciding on a ski trail. Many ski trails are at high elevation, above 6000 feet (1,829 m)