



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

YELLOWSTONE'S PREQUEL: WILDLIFE & HUMANS IN THE PLEISTOCENE

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR - SUMMER 2023

INSTRUCTORS: Joanna E. Lambert, Ph.D. and Jeff T. Reed, Ph.D.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES:

JOANNA LAMBERT, Ph.D. is a scientist and tenured professor of animal evolutionary ecology and conservation biology at the University of Colorado – Boulder. She has a deep passion for the natural world resulting in a career spent publishing and teaching about the ecology, evolution, and conservation biology of wild mammals. Her wildlife research has taken her to every continent on the planet though she has spent most time working in equatorial Africa (>30 years) and more recently in Yellowstone National Park where she studies canid biology. One of her proudest recent conservation-related contributions has been in the effort to restore gray wolves to her home state of Colorado, an initiative founded on the science of reintroduction and recovery of wolves to Yellowstone National Park.

JEFF REED, Ph.D. was born and raised in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in southwest Montana and owns Reedfly Farm, practicing regenerative agriculture and conservation. With a PhD in linguistics and history, he has published on the history of language and humans. He spent 30 years in the technology industry, working on linguistics and artificial intelligence, and now builds solutions that are used by wildlife researchers. He focuses much of his free time interacting with wildlife, practicing paleo-living, researching animal communication via computational linguistics, and living as part of nature. He is an executive committee member of the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group, promoting the co-existence of people and wildlife...though he considers people wildlife too!

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is an activity **level 3** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 5 miles per day, comfortably, with occasional elevation gains up to 1000 feet in undulating terrain.*

**All field activities will be conducted as a group. If you cannot meet the activity level expectations during your program, you may be restricted from participation in daily outings. We will not alter program itineraries or activities to accommodate participants who cannot meet the expectations of the stated activity level.*

LOCATION: Lamar Buffalo Ranch – Yellowstone National Park, WY

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES: The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday August 17, 2023, and ends on Monday, August 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 17, 2023, and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 22, 2023.

MEALS: You will need to bring your own food; lunch should be able to travel in the field

For general information about the facilities, preparing for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

FROM THE INSTRUCTORS

Yellowstone National Park is world-renown for its wildlife and for having among the most intact carnivore assemblages in the United States, but it pales in comparison to its faunal diversity in the evolutionary past. Join us in this 5-day seminar as we trace the evolutionary, archaeological, and cultural history of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem over the past 2 million years, but with a special emphasis on the last ~20,000. Through lecture, film, and -- most importantly -- time in the field, you will learn about the magnificent wildlife of Yellowstone in the Pleistocene epoch when humans were newcomers to North America and mighty glaciers shaped every aspect of life. Topics to be discussed will include the diversity and adaptations of wildlife in the Pleistocene compared to today, how ancient humans lived and interacted with wildlife, the shared evolutionary history of humans with animals, the special relationship between humans and their dogs, how humans made a living both during and after the retreat of ice sheets, and how you too can "listen for the language of wildlife" like those who came before us.

We aim to spend as much time as possible outdoors—weather and conditions permitting, this will include at least 6 hours+ looking for and observing animals and considering landscapes in which both humans and wildlife coexisted. These field forays will be expedition-like in nature, meaning that we will aim to be as spontaneous and exploratory as circumstances allow and as opportunities arise. In addition to wildlife observation, we will also encourage participants to be as attuned to their surroundings as possible, listening, watching, and even smelling every cue that the land is revealing about its wildlife, both then and now. Discussion will be on-going throughout the class – not just in lecture but in the field and vehicle as we make our way through the Park, especially the northern range (though we will likely travel further afield as well – e.g., Hayden Valley, etc). However, we will also encourage contemplation in silence. Each day we will have guided natural history hikes and a lecture; our evenings will be spent in either lecture, watching film, or in facilitated group discussion.

We are so very much looking forward to meeting you and enjoying the magnificence of Yellowstone together!

Please feel free to contact us before the course starts! We can be reached at: joanna.lambert@colorado.edu and www.joannalambert.com (Joanna), jeff@reedfly.com and www.thelanguagesoflife.com (Jeff)

- Joanna Lambert & Jeff Reed

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Please note that our itinerary is designed to take advantage of the best opportunities in the park, but may be adjusted to adapt to weather conditions, wildlife activity, holidays, and road construction. *The details and timing of the agenda are subject to change.*

Day 1 Orientation

The program starts with an evening orientation. During this time, we will get to know one another and you will be introduced to life at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch. We will go over the seminar itinerary and key concepts to be discussed throughout the class as well as what to expect what to pack for the field each day.

Days 2-5 Wildlife Watching and Learning in the Field

Participants will spend each morning in the field looking for wildlife and observing their behavior, with the idea of spending as little time in the vehicle as possible. All excellent opportunities for observing animals will be taken advantage of, but we will pay particular attention to mammals and birds. In addition, we will consider landscape and geological features. Emphasis will be on the northern range. Also, of course, we will spontaneously take advantage of all amazing wildlife sightings!

After a morning spent in the field, participants will return to the Lamar Buffalo Ranch for a late lunch, a bit of down time, then a lecture. Each late afternoon the students will be given the option of going on a guided natural history hike in which animals will be observed. Depending on time, an early evening animal viewing drive might also be an option. Evenings will include lecture, films, or facilitated group discussion.

Impromptu discussions in the field will center on:

- What was the biodiversity of Yellowstone like 20,000 years ago? What animals persist today, and which did we lose?
- How have animals changed morphologically and behaviorally over the epochs of geological time?
- What do we know about human – wildlife interactions in the evolutionary past?
- How did humans make a living during periods of extreme cold and glaciation?
- What were the features of first contact of humans with naïve wildlife of North America as they entered from North America?

Day 6 Check out by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

Required:

- Notebook and pencil for observations

Optional:

- Camera
- Binoculars
- Spotting Scope

RECOMMENDED READING

No prior reading is required, but participants might enjoy the following publications, that complement the program. Most publications are available at Yellowstone Forever's online store at shop.yellowstone.org Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount and proceeds directly support the park.

- Flores D (2022) *Wild New World: The Epic Story of Animals and People in America*. WW Norton & Company
- Brasatte S (2022) *The Rise and Reign of the Mammals: A New History, from the Shadow of the Dinosaurs to Us*. Mariner Book Publishers
- MacDonald DH (2018) *Before Yellowstone: Native American Archaeology in the National Park*. Samuel & Althea Stroum Book Publishers
- Nabokov P (2016) *Restoring a Presence: American Indians and Yellowstone National Park*. University of Oklahoma Press

WHOM TO CONTACT

For any questions, concerns, or additional information please contact the following:

- Program itinerary, health forms, payment, and activity questions please contact Yellowstone Forever at institute@yellowstone.org or 406-848-2400
- Road updates, park conditions, and general park information please contact Yellowstone National Park Service at <https://www.nps.gov/yell/contacts.htm>
- If running late for a program, please contact 406-848-2400