



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

YELLOWSTONE NATURALIST

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR - SUMMER 2023

INSTRUCTORS: Yellowstone Forever Institute Staff and National Park Service Staff (to also include TBD local area experts and guest speakers)

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: The Yellowstone Institute has been providing in-depth educational programs in Yellowstone for over 40 years. Our field educators are **among** the best expert naturalist guides in Yellowstone. They're professionals with training credentials who are dedicating their careers to this vital work. They live in the Yellowstone ecosystem, they work alongside park researchers, and thus can provide accurate and exciting "behind the scenes" perspectives on the park's history, management, geology, flora, and fauna.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is an activity **level 2** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 3 miles per day, comfortably, with elevation gains up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking possible.*

**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: Course begins at the Yellowstone Forever classrooms located in Gardiner, MT.

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES: The program begins at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, and ends on Monday, September 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: No lodging is provided for this course, however, there may be limited lodging available through Yellowstone Forever at the Yellowstone Field Overlook Campus. For more information, please contact the Institute at institute@yellowstone.org. You can also find more information on Gardiner based lodging here: [Gardiner, MT - Lodging](#). (Yellowstone River Motel will grant you 10% off their rooms if you mention that you are taking a Yellowstone Forever Field Seminar.)

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

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

FROM THE INSTRUCTOR(S)

Welcome to an intense and rewarding course with Yellowstone Forever. The *Yellowstone Naturalist* course teaches skills for those interested in increasing natural history knowledge and promoting awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Yellowstone's natural environment. The *Yellowstone Naturalist* program is designed for adults who want to stoke their curiosity, deepen their knowledge of the natural world, and give back to their communities in new ways. Participants gain skills to interpret Yellowstone's flora, fauna, and landscape. This course focuses on the depth of Yellowstone content knowledge with some methodology of instruction.

To learn these skills, students in this course will earn credentials as a certified Montana Master Naturalist through the Montana Natural History Center and receive a *Yellowstone Naturalist* certificate through Yellowstone Forever.

The focus of this week-long course will be developing skills to read the Yellowstone landscape. We'll highlight and discuss themes related to natural history, cultural history, trophic cascades, ecology, controversial topics, pedagogy, and habitat to frame our course. Through this multi-day, intensive course, participants will develop the ability to understand and interpret the Yellowstone landscape. There will be classroom instruction, field-based learning, and demonstrations. You can expect to be in the field and/or classroom eight to twelve hours a day and have evening assignments or activities. Your objective is to learn as much as you can in a week and demonstrate your skills as a Yellowstone naturalist. Expect to challenge yourself and think on your feet.

We look forward to you joining us this summer in Yellowstone!

- *Yellowstone Forever Educator Staff*

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 activity, holidays, and road construction.

Example itinerary below. The details and timing of the agenda are subject to change – participants will be informed immediately of any changes.

Be prepared for a packed schedule, as there is much to do and learn in Yellowstone National Park.

Day 1 -

- Evening orientation and introductions beginning 5:00 p.m.
- Evening presentation regarding what it means to be a naturalist and a breakdown of the class expectations for the week.

Day 2

- Morning to afternoon will cover Nature Journaling.
- Afternoon to early evening will be a geology field trip with local geologist.

Day 3

- Early morning to early evening Valley wildlife watching
 - Meet up in the field with Rick McIntyre, famed Yellowstone wolf educator, and Yellowstone Wolf Project to discuss current wolf research
 - Meet up with bison biologists to discuss current bison research

Day 4

- Morning will be spent With Katy Duffy, M.S., former NPS ranger and bird biologist, learning about birds
- Afternoon will be spent learning about plant taxonomy and Yellowstone wildflowers also led by Katy Duffy
- Evening presentation and guest lecturer on Tribal connections to Yellowstone

Day 5

- Morning to late afternoon will be spent with Dr. James Halfpenny at the Yellowstone Track Center in Gardiner, MT learning about tracks, gaits, and casts
- Late afternoon tour of the Heritage Resource Center in Gardiner, MT

Day 6

- Morning discussion on ecology and putting it all together
- Afternoon participants will work on putting presentations together
- Later afternoon and evening participants will present and award ceremony

Day 7

- Morning check-out by 9:00 a.m.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document.

There are no specific items required for this class.

- You will be provided a journal and coloring set.

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.

Websites:

- [Yellowstone National Park's website](#)

Books:

- Alden, P. et al. 1998. *National Audubon Society Field Guide to the Rocky Mountain States*. Alfred A. Knopf; New York, NY.
- Craighead, K. 1999. *Large Mammals of the Yellowstone Ecosystem*. Yellowstone Association: Yellowstone National Park, WY.
- Koch, E. D. and C. R. Peterson. 1995. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks*. University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, UT.
- McEneaney, T. 1988. *Birds of Yellowstone*. Roberts Rinehart: Boulder, CO.
- Streubel, D. P. 1989. *Small Mammals of the Yellowstone Ecosystem*. Roberts Rinehart: Boulder, CO.

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