



# YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

## THE EVOLVING YELLOWSTONE MODEL: THE PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE OF CONSERVATION

### Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – WINTER 2023/24

**INSTRUCTOR:** Mark Fiege, PhD

**INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:** Mark Fiege is a Professor of History and the Wallace Stegner Chair in Western American Studies at Montana State University, Bozeman. For the past three decades, he has taught courses on environmental history, the history of national parks and protected areas, and western American history. Since joining the faculty at MSU in 2016, he has taught History of Yellowstone, an annual field-based course that sweeps broadly through time and space across the Greater Yellowstone region. He is the author of *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (2012), co-editor of *National Parks beyond the Nation: Global Perspectives on "America's Best Idea"* (2016), co-author of "Elegant Conservation: Reimagining Protected Area Stewardship in the 21st Century," *Ecology and Society* 28(1) (2023), and co-editor of the forthcoming *Wallace Stegner's Unsettled Country: Ruin, Realism, and Possibility in the American West* (2024). He first visited Yellowstone National Park in 1965.

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** This course is activity level 1 and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared for leisurely hikes up to 1 mile per day through relatively flat terrain on maintained or snow-packed trails.

*\*All field activities will be conducted as a group. If participants cannot meet the activity level expectations during the program, they may be restricted from participation in daily outings. Program itineraries or activities will not be altered 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 7:00 PM on Thursday, January 4, 2024, and ends on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at 5:00 PM

**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](mailto:institute@yellowstone.org). More information on Gardiner-based lodging here: [Gardiner, MT - Lodging](#).

**MEALS:** This course is not catered. Participants will need to bring their 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 [Gardiner Field Seminars - Winter General Information](#) document.

## PROGRAM ITINERARY

A remarkable and inspiring feature of Yellowstone National Park and other protected areas is that they have never embodied or represented only one static purpose, use, or meaning. Rather, those purposes, uses, and meanings have shifted and expanded over time. A place of natural wonders and wilderness, Yellowstone is also a place of dynamic change and complexity that people have continually reimagined and reinvented as they have encountered it. People are always searching for Yellowstone, always discovering new things in and around it, and in the process, always redefining it. Today, the forces of Earth System change, primarily the climate, press down on Yellowstone. At the same time, calls to re-Indigenize parks and other protected areas and restore them to their original stewards raise the prospect that Yellowstone and comparable lands might outgrow the colonial identities that have defined them over the past 150 years. The future is uncertain, but Yellowstone of 2072 will be very different from Yellowstone of 1972 or 1872.

Yellowstone National Park is an outstanding site for folks to explore the past, present, and future of conservation in the United States and the modern world. Drawing on a richness of primary documents, scholarship, commentaries, and other sources, students will survey the evolution of Yellowstone and other protected areas while looking toward the future of conservation in North America and on Earth. Considering environmental history and the history of conservation centered on Yellowstone, what might be the likely future of Yellowstone and other parks and protected areas? What might be the worst possible Yellowstone future, and what might be the best? As the class seeks answers to these and other questions, they will investigate the world-class collection of historical sources in the Yellowstone Research Center. Will be shared with each other. When departing, students can expect to have a grasp of how a deeper understanding of Yellowstone history can inform and enlarge our imagination of the Yellowstone future.

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.

*The details and timing of the agenda are subject to change.*

### **Day 1            Evening Orientation**

Welcome and evening introduction to basic themes, issues, and questions.

### **Day 2            In the Field**

Review the evolving model of conservation exemplified by Yellowstone and other protected areas in the U.S. public lands system and around the world. In the late afternoon, weather and conditions permitting, the class will venture into the Gardiner area to examine evidence of history in the land itself.

### **Day 3            In the Field**

Continuation of Yellowstone conservation history, and in the afternoon, students will visit the Yellowstone Research Center to examine documents and artifacts pertinent to the class's study.

### **Day 4            Last Day**

Broaden inquiry and reflection into consideration of the present and future of Yellowstone. Late morning to very early afternoon, weather and conditions permitting, the group will visit the Mammoth area to look for evidence of environmental change and changing approaches to conservation embedded in the land. Mid to late afternoon, the class will reconvene to reflect and share perspectives on the issues and questions addressed in the time together.

## PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

This course requires participants to bring the items listed below. Additionally, for general program gear and for a full list of what is included in this course, check out the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Winter General Information](#) document.

- **Notebook** - and/or paper for recording information.

## 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](http://shop.yellowstone.org) Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount and proceeds directly support the park.

- Schullery, Paul. *Past and Future Yellowstone: Finding Our Way in Wonderland*. University of Utah Press, 2015.
- 2014 Wallace Stegner Lecture (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015)
- Kekek, Jason Stark et al. "Re-Indigenizing Yellowstone," Wyoming Law Review Vol. 22, No. 2, Article 7 (2022): 397-487
- Randall K. Wilson, *America's Public Lands: From Yellowstone to Smokey Bear and Beyond*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.

## 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](mailto: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