

WELCOME

If you are a newcomer to the YF Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits you during your program. Our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality, immersive educational experience, in addition to a safe and memorable visit to the world's first national park.

Yellowstone Forever benefits from the hard work and generosity of volunteer program assistants. You will likely meet the program volunteers assisting your program. Program assistants receive professional training in Wilderness First Aid, emergency response, and bus driving. Additionally, they help with program logistics, cleaning and maintenance of facilities, and anything you might need during your time with us.

Your program includes lodging, tuition, and transportation during your program. It does not include transportation to the park, food, and park entrance fees.

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 institute@yellowstone.org if you have any questions. For specific class details, including an agenda, a letter from the instructor, class-specific equipment, and a recommended reading list, see the course letter.

We recommend all first-time visitors seek general park information through the National Park Service at 307.344.2107 or www.nps.gov/yell.



FACILITIES

Bunkhouse

The communal bunkhouse is open at all times and is the center of activity, where it houses two classrooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Make yourself at home in the bunkhouse by meeting new people, enjoying a midnight snack, and relaxing with classmates. The first classroom is used as a mudroom where coats and boots can be left by the door. Be sure to bring a pair of slippers or moccasins to wear in the bunkhouse.



Take a virtual tour of the Lamar Buffalo Ranch [HERE](#)



Bathhouse

The ranch has a heated bathhouse complete with men's and women's bathrooms and private showers. There are no bathrooms in the individual cabins. The bathhouse is near the cabins and has paper towels and hand soap for your convenience. You will be provided a code for the bathhouse door per your arrival to the ranch.

Students will need to bring their own toiletries and bath towels.

LODGING

Yellowstone Forever Institute students in Field Seminars stay in our rustic lodging at the historic Lamar Buffalo Ranch as part of their class. All participants will stay in a Private Single Cabin (cabin to yourself) unless otherwise requested (folks traveling together).

Each log cabin has three single beds, chairs, propane heaters, and reading lamps. Guests are responsible for bringing their own sleeping bag, pillow, extra blankets if desired, a flashlight for getting around at night, and a non-electric alarm clock (cabins do not have outlets).

Stoves, lanterns, and candles cannot be used in or around the cabins, and smoking and food are not permitted in the cabins. Camping and pets (with the exception of service animals) are not allowed.

All lodging is available for check-in at 4:00 p.m. MST/MDT on the first evening and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. MST on the final course date. On-site lodging is required for Lamar Buffalo Ranch courses, and dates are non-negotiable.



MEALS

Guests bring and prepare all their own food. The kitchen is a community area where everyone does their own cooking and cleans up after themselves. Meals should be kept simple since you will be preparing your meals in a shared cooking facility. It is equipped with gas stoves, a microwave, toaster, plates, silverware, cooking utensils, pots, and pans. Additionally, ranch staff supply spices, coffee, tea, sugar, and creamer.

Some courses include catering and are noted in the course letter. For classes that are catered, all meals during your program are provided; this includes:

- Dinner the first night after check-in/orientation
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the week
- Breakfast the morning of check-out

You are still encouraged to bring snacks and there will be a place for you to store them in the community kitchen. We can cater to most all food allergies/restrictions; please note them in your registration.



DIRECTIONS

Directions to Lamar Buffalo Ranch

To access the Lamar Buffalo Ranch in summer there are five different entrances to access the park. The ranch is approximately one hour from Gardiner, MT. To get to the ranch from Yellowstone Forever's office in Gardiner, MT (308 Park St, Gardiner MT 59030) see the directions below.

- Head south on US-89 through Gardiner for approximately 1 mile, headed towards the Roosevelt Arch.
- Before the Roosevelt Arch turn left onto S 3rd St. and take another left at the stop sign.
- Head to the North Entrance Yellowstone National Park entrance station. After paying for the park permit, proceed into the park and drive 5.2 miles towards Mammoth Hot Springs.
- Once in Mammoth, turn left and travel 18.1 miles to Tower Junction.
- At Tower Junction turn left and travel 10.5 miles until reaching the Lamar Buffalo Ranch, proceed to turn left and park.

Prior to leaving always check park road conditions and closures at <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/conditions.htm> or call [307-344-2117](tel:307-344-2117) for recorded information.

PARK MAP



YELLOWSTONE
FOREVER

OPEN ROADS

YF FACILITIES

ENTRANCE GATES

COMMON POINTS
OF INTEREST

1 mile (mi) = 1.609344
kilometers (km)

ACTIVITY LEVELS

Program Fitness Level Expectations

Each course is classified in difficulty with a 1 to 5 rating.

Level 1: Be prepared to hike up to 1 mile per day, comfortably, through relatively flat terrain on maintained trails.

Level 2: Be prepared to hike up to 3 miles per day, comfortably, with elevation gains up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking possible.

Level 3: Be prepared to hike up to 5 miles per day, comfortably, with occasional elevation gains up to 1000 feet in undulating terrain.

Level 4: Be prepared to hike up to 8 miles per day, at a brisk pace, comfortably, with climbs up to 1500 feet on dirt trails. Loose rocks, uneven footing, and off-trail hiking are possible. Good coordination is recommended.

Level 5: Be prepared for brisk aerobic, destination-oriented hiking up to 12 miles a day. Should be physically conditioned to do these hikes comfortably. Elevation changes up to 2000 feet on dirt trails or off-trail. Loose rock, uneven footing, steep hillside traverses, and stream crossings are possible. Good coordination is required.

All field activities will be conducted as a group. If a student cannot meet the activity level expectations during their program, they 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. Additionally, it is possible that programs will not hit or exceed the classified difficulty, however, participants must BE PREPARED to do so.

To see the difficulty level and fitness expectations for a particular course, see that class's course letter and registration page. To best prepare, we recommend beginning an exercise program right away. 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, visit www.yellowstone.org/health-information.

WHAT TO BRING

Suggested Packing List

Below are suggested items to bring to all Field Seminar Programs. For equipment and clothing specific to a course, please see the corresponding course letter. Additionally, Yellowstone Forever field staff assigned to there program will carry a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.

Equipment

- Hand Sanitizer
- Daypack, with enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, etc.
- Water bottle, for hiking programs, it is recommended to bring at least two liters of water with you for the day's activities
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen/Lip protector, sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly
- Optics, camera and binoculars

Clothing

- Insulating underwear, capilene, polypropylene, wool, or similar wicking fabric
- Midweight insulating layer, a light synthetic fleece or wool shirt/pullover
- Heavyweight insulating layer, wool, down, or heavy-weight fleece jacket
- Waterproof and windproof outer layer, lightweight and breathable, jackets and pants
- Pants, wool, fleece pants are preferred, no cotton
- Hat, 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, specifically designed for hiking, that wick moisture
- Hiking boots that provide stability and traction make sure they are broken in, comfortable, and do not cause hot spots or blisters

The historic ranch runs on limited solar power with backup generators. For this reason, please do not bring electrical appliances such as radios and crock pots as these items overload the system and can cause black-outs.

CANCELLATION POLICY

PLEASE READ THIS POLICY BEFORE REGISTERING FOR PROGRAMS

Once registered for a program, registration is subject to the following cancellation policy.

If you cancel:

- **90 days or more** prior to the start of the program, 100% of the payment will be refunded minus a \$50 per person processing fee.
- **60 days or more** prior to the start of the program, 50% of the payment will be refunded minus a \$50 per person processing fee.
- **30 days or more** prior to the start of the program, 25% of the payment will be refunded minus a \$50 per person processing fee.
- If the cancel with **fewer than 30 days** prior to the start of the program, the full payment will be forfeited.

To guard against unexpected circumstances, we strongly advise purchasing travel insurance to protect against loss should you have to cancel your registration.

All programs are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.



CODE OF ETHICS

The Yellowstone Forever Institute is committed to demonstrating a high standard of appropriate and ethical behavior in Yellowstone. As a participant in a Yellowstone Forever Institute program, we ask all students to adhere to the following Code of Ethics. In addition to the ethics highlighted below, the Yellowstone Forever 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 Yellowstone Forever 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. Yellowstone Forever 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

Yellowstone Forever 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 Yellowstone Forever 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

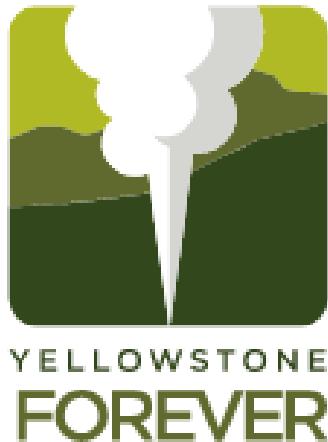
We will pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Your instructor will discuss techniques for properly disposing of human waste in the field.

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 program and should expect to walk through mud, snow, or puddles in the trail.

YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

Our Mission



Yellowstone Forever protects, preserves, and enhances Yellowstone National Park through education and philanthropy.

We provide experiences and opportunities that create lasting connections to Yellowstone National Park, building a global community that is engaged and invested in the future of the world's first national park.

Our vision is that Yellowstone National Park endures forever.

Supporter Program & Retail Stores

Park Stores

Yellowstone Forever park stores feature more than 900 books, maps, and videos to help participants plan their visit, along with a wide selection of shirts, hats, and other logo items. Yellowstone Forever members receive a 15% discount on merchandise online or at any of the locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone.

Visit: shop.yellowstone.org

Membership Program

Yellowstone Forever members directly fund visitor education and park preservation.

Benefits include:

- 15% discount on merchandise at all Park Stores locations, including the online store, Yellowstone National Park Lodges gift shop and Yellowstone General Stores. Exclusions apply.
- Discounts at over 400 participating public land stores across the country.
- A library card for the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What airport should someone fly into?

A. Commercial airlines serve the following airports near Yellowstone National Park all year: Cody and Jackson, WY; Bozeman and Billings, MT, and Idaho Falls, ID. The West Yellowstone, MT airport is serviced from early May to mid-October from Salt Lake City, UT.

Q. Does YF offer a shuttle service?

A. Yellowstone Forever does not have a shuttle service available for summer seasons.

Q. Is alcohol allowed at the ranch?

A. Yes, however it is BYOB and guests must be 21+ years of age to consume.

Q. Are tents or trailers allowed at LBR?

A. No, all participants must stay in a designated cabin.

Q. How does one communicate with the instructor before the class?

A. All questions and communication about the program can be directed at the instructor, who will reach out to participants first. For general questions please contact YF at 406-848-2400 or institute@yellowstone.org

Q. What is an emergency number to can give family?

A. 406-641-2185, Lamar Buffalo Ranch

Q. Can a spouse/partner stay with me and not take the class?

A. No, all participants must register in the class if they are utilizing lodging at the ranch.

Q. Can participants stay in Lamar lodging before or after the class?

A. Yes, only on a case-to-case basis. To inquire if there is availability, please contact YF at 406-848-2400

Q. What kind of food should participants bring?

A. The kitchen has everything needed to make any basic meal. Breakfast and dinners typically take place at LBR and participants are able to cook full meals, however, remember all participants are sharing a fridge and will have a large plastic tub (of their own) to put non-perishable items in. For many of the programs plan on bringing sack lunch items for lunch in the field.

Q. Does YF provide linens for the cabins?

A. We do not. Please bring a sleeping bag, pillow, extra blankets if preferred, a flashlight for getting around at night, and a non-electric alarm clock (cabins do not have outlets).

Q. Can I rent equipment from YF?

A. YF does have limited rental gear, please reach out directly. Otherwise, there are locations in Bozeman, Gardiner, and Mammoth Hot Springs where gear can be reserved.

Q. Can CPAPS be accommodated?

A. In most cases, yes. Please reach out to YF directly for more information.

Q. Where can you park your car when on a Field Seminar?

A. There is a large, gravel parking lot at the ranch to park vehicles while attending programs.

Q. Are instructors tips included in the program payment?

A. Gratuities for the instructors are not included but are recommended and greatly appreciated.