



# YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

## YELLOWSTONE'S PREQUEL: WILDLIFE & HUMANS IN THE EVOLUTIONARY PAST AND NOW

### Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – SUMMER 2024

**INSTRUCTORS:** Joanna Lambert, Ph.D & Jeff 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 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 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:** Lamar Buffalo Ranch – Yellowstone National Park, WY

**PROGRAM DATES & TIMES:** The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 9, 2024, and goes through Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

**LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT:** Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 9, 2024 and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 13, 2024.

**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, preparation for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.**

## **PROGRAM ITINERARY**

Yellowstone National Park is known around the world 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 that will 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 you.

You will 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 you will aim to be as spontaneous and exploratory as circumstances allow and as opportunities arise. In addition to wildlife observation, you will also encourage you to be as attuned to your 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 you make your way through the Park, especially the northern range (though you will likely travel further afield as well – e.g., Hayden Valley, etc). However, you will also encourage contemplation in silence. Each day you will have guided natural history hikes and a lecture; your evenings will be spent in either lecture, watching film, or in facilitated group discussion.

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 Welcome**

The program starts with an evening orientation. You will get to know one another and be introduced to the program. Throughout the evening, the itinerary and seminar key concepts will be discussed, as well as what to expect to pack for the field each day.

### **Day 2 - 4 Wildlife Watching and Learning in the Field**

You 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 particular attention will be paid to mammals and birds. In addition, you will consider landscape and geological features. Emphasis will be on the northern range. Also, of course, spontaneous amazing wildlife sightings will be taken advantage of!

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 you 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 were lost?
- 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 5**

### **Check-Out**

Check out of cabins by 9:00 a.m.

## PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of what is included in this course, in addition to recommended equipment check out the [Lamar Buffalo Ranch - Summer General Information](#) document.

### Required:

- Notebook and pencil for observations

### Optional:

- Magnifying glass or hand lens
- Camera
- Binoculars

## RECOMMENDED READING

There are books and reference materials at the ranch for the class to enjoy during the stay. In addition to those materials, the following recommended readings are not required but may enhance the visit.

- Flores, Dan. *Wild New World The Epic Story Of Animals And People In America*. W W Norton, 2022.
- Brusatte, Steve. *Rise And Reign Of The Mammals: A New History From The Shadow Of The Dinosaurs To Us*. Mariner Books, 2023.
- Macdonald, Douglas H. *Before Yellowstone: Native American Archaeology In The National Park*. University Of Washington Press, 2018.
- Nabokov, Peter. *Restoring A Presence: American Indians And Yellowstone National Park*. University Of Oklahoma Press, 2016.

## WHOM TO CONTACT

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

- Program itinerary, health forms, payment, and general program 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.