



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

CAPTURING YELLOWSTONE'S NIGHT SKY

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – SUMMER 2024

INSTRUCTOR: Kevin League, M.A.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Kevin is a Helena, Montana based award-winning professional landscape, lifestyle, and wildlife photographer, capturing Montana and the western United States' most beautiful, fleeting, and fascinating moments. He has been a student of photography for several decades beginning as a teenager when his parents handed down their 35mm film Nikon cameras to him. Fast forward a few decades later, Kevin would establish his photography business in 2015, and in 2020 he opened a gallery in downtown Helena, fulfilling a lifelong dream and quickly becoming one of Montana's favorite new visual artists. Inspired by early conservation photographers, Kevin believes his ability to share the beauty of our last best places will inspire others to respect, protect, and enjoy them. Kevin has dedicated his life to conservation through his photography, educational workshops and throughout a career protecting natural places that has spanned over 20 years with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is activity **level 1** and students enrolled in this course are expected to be active participants. Be prepared to hike up to 1 mile per day, comfortably, through relatively flat terrain on maintained 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 p.m. on Thursday, August 1, 2024, and goes through Sunday, August 4, 2024, at 12:00 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: 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 [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document.

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Yellowstone is famous for so many great reasons – the geothermal features, abundant wildlife, and notoriety as the world's first National Park, to name a few. However, very few know of the park's other unique attribute – its amazing night sky. Nighttime holds a special allure and stillness in Yellowstone, showcasing a pristine example of the nighttime wilderness few around the world get to see. You will learn to capture Yellowstone's summer Milky Way with your camera, as it shines with its colors and mysterious textures, while the constellations reign overhead in their myth and lore. You will spend evenings into the night, combining classroom instruction to learn the technical concepts of astrophotography with lots of in-the-field time to capture Yellowstone by starlight, perhaps with a chorus of wolves and a shooting star or two!

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**

Evening, Welcome and introductions. Presentation with night photography inspiration, course overview, and introduction into night photography practices. You will also practice your new skills from a nearby spot.

Day 2

Morning, Sleep in.

Midday, Explore the park or relax on your own.

Late Afternoon, Presentation: Night photography practices, techniques, and execution.

Evening, Head to the Roosevelt Arch to learn how to balance ambient light from town with the stars, then south to photograph the Mammoth Terraces.

Day 3

Morning, Sleep in.

Midday, Explore the park or relax on your own.

Late Afternoon, Image review and how-to editing nighttime photography.

Evening, Photograph thermals and geysers in the upper geyser basin.

Day 4

Morning, Sleep in.

Mid-Morning, Wrap up session.

PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

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

Required:

- DSLR or mirrorless interchangeable lens camera, with the capability to do manual exposure settings. 'Full frame' 35mm sensor cameras do well at night, but 'APC-C' or 'crop' sensor cameras with manual settings are acceptable. For this course, we do not recommend 'superzooms,' 'prosumer' or 'bridge' type cameras. Don't forget to bring extra memory cards and batteries and charger.
- Your camera's manual. We may not have reliable access to the internet, so please bring your camera manual to answer any settings questions that the instructor is unable to help with.
- Sturdy Tripod, and mounting plate that attaches to your camera body, plus a compact hex wrench set, often sold at bike shops, is a great tool to have in your bag to tighten and adjust tripods and mounting hardware. ▪ Headlamp, and extra batteries. I highly recommend headlamps that feature a dim red light that is particularly useful for illuminating your area without negatively impacting your night vision.
- 'Fast' wide angle lens with manual focus. Any lens with manual focus ability will work for night photography, but a 'fast' wide-angle lens will work the best. The speed of a lens refers to the aperture, and a fast lens would be anything with an aperture of f/2.8 or larger (the smaller the number, the larger the aperture). f/2.8, f/1.8, f/1.4 are all great night lenses! Wide angle lenses 10mm to 24mm are ideal. Suggested, but optional:
- A laptop with a card reader with photo editing software for editing photos during downtime as well as for asking questions related to editing. I personally use Lightroom CC Classic and will be doing demonstrations with it.
- A remote shutter trigger with timer, connects either wirelessly or via a wire to your camera. Your camera should have a 'bulb mode' which allows you to use an external shutter release trigger. I recommend remote triggers with a digital timer feature for programming long-exposures. I find this type of device to be an easy way to operate your camera's exposure settings at night while minimizing disturbance to the camera during long exposures. Look on Amazon for 'Newer' or 'JJC' brands for your specific camera model – you should be able to find a wired model for around \$30. Your camera's manufacturer should also offer one, but at a higher price.
- PhotoPills smart phone app, (\$10.99 one-time fee, iOS or Android) is an amazing tool for planning and pre-visualizing where and when the Milky Way or other night sky features will appear in the sky. Other helpful tools include the ability to calculate what your shutter speed should be for pinpoint stars based on your specific camera body, lens and f-stop setting. I will go through how to use the app during the course.

RECOMMENDED READING

No prior reading is required, but participants might enjoy the following publications, that complement the program.

- National Park Service. *2023 Resource and Issues Handbook*. NPS, 2023.

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 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.