



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

WILLOWS AND WOLVES

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – SUMMER 2024

INSTRUCTOR: Brenna Cassidy, Ph.D Candidate

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Brenna Cassidy was born and raised in northern Illinois where her curiosity for the natural world grew in the forests and tall grass prairies. She completed a degree in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and spent summers during her undergraduate degree in northern Wisconsin and Yellowstone National Park. After graduating, she moved back to Yellowstone and worked on multiple projects studying birds, cougars, and wolves and spent five years seasonally migrating between the Bird Program and Wolf Project. Her PhD research focuses on the survival and reproduction of gray wolves in Yellowstone National Park. While not working, she can be found in the pottery studio and following her dog around the mountains.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: This course is 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 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 Thursday, August 1, 2024, and goes through Saturday, August 3, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

LODGING CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT: Lodging check-in begins at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 1, 2024 and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 4, 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

Join us in the unforgettable Lamar Valley, where you will witness the intricate dance between wolves and their environment, discover the secrets of trophic cascades, and explore the legacy of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park. You will be immersed in the park's Northern Range, known for its rich wildlife, including wolves, bears, beavers, elk, and bison. Daily field trips will provide you with hands-on experience in how the ecosystem has changed over the last 30 years. As your adventure unfolds, you will engage in conversations about Yellowstone's future. This immersive experience promises an unforgettable encounter with the park's natural wonders, where the wolves howl and the bison roam!

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

Do wolves change rivers?

Start the early morning with an optional wildlife-watching opportunity. Following, there will be a short classroom discussion on the history of wildlife in Yellowstone and trophic cascades.

In the afternoon there will be a field trip to Crystal Creek. This will be a meandering hike, about a 1.5-mile round trip and minimal elevation gain, mostly on-trail where we will see and learn about beavers, songbirds, and wolf reintroduction.

Day 3

The dance of predation: how wolves, elk, and bison coexist

Start the early morning with an optional wildlife-watching opportunity. In the afternoon there will be a field trip to Elk Creek. This will be a short distance hike, about a one-mile round trip and 250 feet of elevation gain, mostly on-trail, where we will discuss how wolves, elk, and bison interact. We will spend the rest of the afternoon predicting the future of Yellowstone ecology.

If the weather cooperates, there will be an optional evening hike to the Rose Creek wolf acclimation pens. The hike is ~3 miles, 500' of elevation gain, and partially on-trail, partially off-trail on some uneven terrain.

Day 4

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.

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.

- Smith, Douglas W., and Gary Ferguson. *Decade of the Wolf: Returning the Wild to Yellowstone*. Lyons Press, an Imprint of Globe Pequot Press, 2012.
- Smith, Douglas W., et al. *Yellowstone Wolves. Science and Discovery in the World's First National Park*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.
- Stolzenburg, William. *Where the Wild Things Were: Life, Death, and Ecological Wreckage in a Land of Vanishing Predators*. Bloomsbury, 2009.

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.