



YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

AUTUMN WILDLIFE WATCHING

Itinerary & Details

FIELD SEMINAR – SUMMER 2024

INSTRUCTOR: Sam Archibald, M.E.M.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY: Sam Archibald is a Lead Field Educator for Yellowstone Forever. Sam first started with outdoor education as a US Peace Corps volunteer, working with an Ecuadorian nonprofit organization to develop outdoor leadership programs for youth. After earning his master's degree in Environmental Management through Western Colorado University (Gunnison, CO), Sam joined the National Park Service, working as a Crew Leader for the Yellowstone Youth Conservation Corps. What was supposed to be a single season in YNP turned into many as Sam fell in love the vivacity of this ecosystem. Sam first joined Yellowstone Forever's team as a winter seasonal educator and has been a permanent instructor since 2022. Sam is grateful for every day he gets to spend out in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and looks forward to the continual discoveries offered by this wild and wonderful landscape.

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: Course begins at the Yellowstone Forever classrooms located in Gardiner, MT.

PROGRAM DATES & TIMES: The program begins at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, and goes through Friday, September 20, 2024, at 5:00 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

Welcome to Yellowstone's Northern Range! This iconic stretch of mountains, meadows, rivers, and glacial valleys lies at the heart of the greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and is home to 14 carnivores, 8 ungulates, over 150 birds, as well as rodents, reptiles, and more. Autumn casts this landscape in a beautiful light with golden aspen, amber grasses, and crisp foggy mornings. Cooler days mean more active wildlife. Elk herd their harems, wolves wander farther in search of food at a time when prey species are in peak physical condition, and bears frantically feast in preparation for winter. You will seek out as many of these species as possible over the course of three days, starting early to catch animals when they are most active and using binoculars or high-powered spotting scopes to observe their unaltered behavior. In the afternoons, you will leave the road for short hikes (up to 5 miles) to examine tracks, scat, and other sign.

A tentative itinerary is included below, but the bulk of the program can be adapted to your shared interests. You will seek a better understanding of how these species interact with one another, and the management concerns that surround many of our more controversial or threatened species. Open discussion is always encouraged, so bring your questions, concerns, and even personal experiences with you as you explore one of the most intact and diverse ecosystems on the planet.

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

Each day begins at sunrise to catch wildlife when they are most active. You will focus on elusive species like wolves, bears, and moose in the early morning, then turn to other species like elk, bison, and bighorn sheep as the day warms. After lunch, you will go on a short hike in search of tracks and sign while discussing ecology, behavior, recent research, and management. You can expect to return around 4:00 p.m. every day.

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.

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.