



PARK PROJECTS

2024-2025



YELLOWSTONE
FOREVER



Introduction

Yellowstone Forever is the official nonprofit partner of Yellowstone National Park. Our mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance Yellowstone through education and philanthropy.

We connect people to Yellowstone National Park through outstanding visitor experiences and educational programs, and translate those experiences into lifelong support and philanthropic investments that Protect Yellowstone's Ecosystem & Wildlife; Preserve Yellowstone's Heritage, History, & Trails; and Enhance Visitor Experiences & Education.



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Protect

Bison Conservation and Transfer Program

In the early 1900s, there were only about two dozen Yellowstone bison remaining before these icons of the American West were brought back from the brink of extinction. Yellowstone bison descended from the last wild bison herd in North America and represent the last truly wild and free-ranging population of plains bison in existence today. Decades in the making, the Bison Conservation and Transfer Program is a collaborative conservation effort to support the continued natural and cultural conservation of this iconic species. Through this program, Yellowstone bison that are identified as brucellosis-free through a quarantine process are transferred to establish new Tribal and conservation herds across North America, as an alternative to being sent to slaughter. Since 2019, a total of 414 Yellowstone bison have transferred to the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes at Fort Peck. Nearly all of those bison and their



offspring have then been further distributed to 26 Tribes across 12 states in partnership with the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

Yellowstone Forever also supports the Bison Conservation Tribal Internship Program. Coordinating with Yellowstone National Park and the InterTribal Buffalo Council, Tribal interns work alongside National Park Service staff in caring for and testing bison within the park's quarantine facility.

Fundraising Goal: \$300,000

Yellowstone Wolf Research and Education

Between 1995 and 1996, 31 gray wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park after nearly 70 years of absence. The Yellowstone Wolf Project is one of the most detailed studies of a large carnivore in the world, spanning nearly 30 years since wolves were first reintroduced to the park. Year-round field research helps biologists gain data on a broad range of topics, including population dynamics, predator-prey interactions, social behavior, genetics, disease, multi-carnivore competition, ecosystem impacts, and human-wolf relationships.



Studies on wolf genetics, disease, and behavior make the Yellowstone Wolf Project one of the most in-depth studies on a social carnivore. The Wolf Project team also invests a great deal of time to education and outreach, leveraging the talent of dedicated technicians, research associates, and graduate students. Collectively, this work serves the park's mission to understand and preserve native species and ecological processes and informs wolf conservation efforts worldwide. Yellowstone Forever funding is crucial to continue this long-term research project.

Fundraising Goal: \$913,300



Native Fish Restoration

The important work to save the native Yellowstone cutthroat trout, a keystone species, continues. Non-native predatory lake trout were first discovered in Yellowstone Lake in 1994. Within a decade, it was estimated that lake trout depleted 90% of the four million native Yellowstone cutthroat trout that once thrived in Yellowstone Lake. As Yellowstone cutthroat trout—once a reliable food source—began to disappear, grizzly bears, bald eagles, ospreys, otters, and dozens of other native species were negatively impacted. Through sustained efforts, biologists are once again seeing Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the lake's streams and tributaries and have documented grizzly bears feeding on the protein-rich food source in the spring. The Native Fish Conservation Program is committed to significantly reducing the number of lake trout in Yellowstone Lake through annual gillnetting with the goal of restoring and increasing the native Yellowstone cutthroat trout population to at least 75% of its historic levels—approximately three million fish.

Park biologists are also working to expand the ranges of native Westslope cutthroat trout and Arctic grayling to contend with a changing climate, warming waters, and non-native species in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Nearly 200,000 Westslope cutthroat trout and more than 400,000 Arctic grayling have been stocked across four watershed restoration project areas since 2007.

For almost 20 years, Yellowstone Forever has funded this program and the successful elimination of millions of non-native, predatory lake trout from the native Yellowstone cutthroat trout's habitat. This critical work is ongoing and paramount to the integrity of the ecosystem in order to continue the decades of progress for this project.

Fundraising Goal: \$1.3 Million

Bear Conservation Fund

There is nothing quite as exciting as seeing a powerful grizzly in the wild on a cool spring morning or a black bear sow with her playful cubs exploring their new world. For more than 40 years, the park's bear program has collected information used to monitor grizzly and black bear population numbers, monitor food habits, and causes of mortality. Crucial funding for the park's bear management program supports conservation, research, and management of bears in the park. The National Park Service has taken a prominent role in developing methods to manage park visitors in a manner to reduce human-bear conflicts and human causes of mortality while promoting bear conservation. The program implements many proactive measures for management and prevention of human-bear conflicts, including support of food-storage bear-proof boxes. Preventing bears from obtaining human food is one of the top priorities of Yellowstone's wildlife managers. Installing bear-proof metal food storage boxes in Yellowstone's campgrounds improves visitor safety and ensures a safe camping experience for humans and bears.

Continuation of this science-based program is essential to long-term conservation of grizzly and black bears in the Yellowstone region. Adding to the need is the recent proposal by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to remove grizzly bears from Threatened Species status under the Endangered Species Act.



Fundraising Goal: \$300,000



Raptors and Songbirds

Catching a view of a soaring osprey with a fish in its beak, the striking white head of the patriotic bald eagle, or a peregrine falcon, the world's fastest bird, are special moments in Yellowstone. Smaller, but no less important, is the park's songbird population. Yellowstone National Park's long-term Bird



Program has provided more than 30 years of data regarding the park's bird populations. The goal of the project is to maintain long-term monitoring and advance research of raptor species, including bald eagles, golden eagles, owls, red-tailed hawks and Swainson's hawks, osprey, and peregrine falcons. Biologists also work with volunteers to band songbirds as part of the nationwide program MAPS—Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship. This is particularly important in the face of climate change impacts. Yellowstone Forever donor support is needed to continue this long-term project.

Fundraising Goal: \$100,000

Yellowstone Cougar Project

The Yellowstone cougar, also known as mountain lion, is a rarity to see in the wild. The Yellowstone Cougar Project monitors Yellowstone's top feline predator by integrating year-round field work with cutting-edge tools. The project aims to understand population trends, predation patterns, habitat selection, and behavior using tools like Global Positioning System (GPS) accelerometer collars, remote cameras, and noninvasive genetic surveys. This knowledge helps answer questions regarding the role cougars play in predator-prey dynamics, competition with wolves



and bears, and how Yellowstone's predator diversity influences the park's ecology. There are few places left to truly understand how carnivores coexist, compete, interact, and impact their ecosystem.

Fundraising Goal: \$135,000

Elk Calf Survival Study

An icon of the West, the majestic elk are abundant in Yellowstone with up to 20,000 calling the park home in the summer months. These herds are especially active during the rut (mating season) when the bulls (males) bugle to attract females and fight off other males in intense battles. Each spring, cow (female) elk may birth a single calf. Calves are born with brown fur and white spots that provide good camouflage. Calves can walk within one hour of being born but they spend much of their first week of life bedded down as the cow elk hide their newborns to protect them from predators. Elk that inhabit Yellowstone represent a crucial keystone species that influence ecosystem structure and function, sustain large carnivore and scavenger populations, and are of importance to human communities throughout the ecosystem.

Park biologists will conduct a multi-year elk calf survival study in northern Yellowstone to determine survival rates and causes of death. Importantly, this study will seek to follow survival of calves over winter using expandable GPS collars that grow with the neck size of the growing calf. This overwinter survival and growth into the adult age class is a current gap in park biologists' knowledge and is important to elk herd growth and stability. Data from this study will also directly feed into key objectives of the Wolf and Cougar Projects' efforts to understand the relative role of predation and other factors on elk population dynamics. Elk represent an essential component to the park's wildlife community.

Fundraising Goal: \$174,000





Yellowstone's Geothermal Systems

As visitors explore Yellowstone, they may not realize they are traveling on one of the world's largest active volcanoes—an astonishing 30 by 45 miles in size. Heat from this supervolcano forms the most dynamic geothermal system on Earth with more than 10,000 hydrothermal features. Hot springs, gushing geysers (more than 500), bubbling mud pots, steam vents, and other geological wonders found within Yellowstone's boundaries played a key role in the creation of the world's first national park.

The park's Geology Program will study these vast geothermal systems using infrared (IR) image data, which is recognized as the most effective way to capture and monitor changes in hydrothermal areas. IR imagery is captured by flying fixed-winged aircraft

over hydrothermal areas twice a year, with visitor-sensitive sites being flown at greater frequencies. The IR images reveal any notable changes for further study by park geologists. This program will utilize more modern thermal imaging technology and flights will occur more frequently allowing geologists to quickly analyze and compare data captured at different times (from 10 plus years ago and current data that will be captured every 6 months or more). The collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination of this data is a combined effort through the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory (YVO), a consortium of nine state and federal agencies including Yellowstone National Park, United States Geological Survey, and Montana State University.

Fundraising Goal: \$100,000

Preserve

Ranger Horses, Mules, and Corrals

The use of horses and mules for transportation of people, equipment, and supplies in the backcountry is critical for Yellowstone's operations, from ranger patrols and trail work to research studies. These animals are vital during the summer and fall seasons to support ranger travel and operations throughout the park. The goal is to purchase replacement stock for Yellowstone's backcountry rangers and trails packing program, which requires approximately 12 replacement head of horse and mules each year. This ensures that the park keeps the herd the appropriate age, class, and quality that is needed to accomplish Yellowstone's mission in the backcountry. Some of the horses are also used to support the Bison Conservation and Transfer Program. Yellowstone Forever is the primary funding source for the ranger stock purchase and replacement as well as corral rehabilitation.

Fundraising Goal: \$200,000



Heritage and Research Center

Yellowstone's Heritage and Research Center (HRC) houses historical documents, objects, and written records that document the history and science of the park. With several million items, HRC has one of the largest collections in the National Park Service, housed within an archive, a library, and numerous museum collections. Only a handful of parks have their own facility, and Yellowstone is the only national park that is an affiliate of the National Archives.

The HRC is in need of long-overdue upgrades. In its current state, the building is to capacity. New systems tailored to support an archive of this size and complexity are needed to maximize space to ensure long-term preservation of the materials. These upgrades would have a significant impact on the effectiveness and longevity of the HRC with the potential to increase storage capacity by 50%.



Additionally, the Research Library's collection of rare materials includes books, pamphlets, audio/visual, and other materials that are fragile and irreplaceable. Yellowstone protects over 22,000 volumes as well as over 1,500 rare and unique books. Many of these first-edition books cover topics about the establishment and early development of Yellowstone National Park and are valuable to researchers and a draw to attendees on public and private tours. The library's collections are of great significance to both Yellowstone employees and researchers as they learn, study, publish, and create educational programs about Yellowstone. All these collections require active and professional curatorial management to ensure that they are protected and accessible to researchers and the public.

Fundraising Goals:

Preserving Yellowstone's History & Archives: \$150,000

Preserving Access to Yellowstone's Rare Collections: \$165,900

Yellowstone Tribal Engagement: Celebrating Cultural Heritage and Collaboration

In partnership with the National Park Service, Yellowstone Forever is committed to advancing Tribal engagement initiatives across Yellowstone National Park. Among these initiatives is the Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center, established in 2022 at Old Faithful, which is dedicated to the celebration and preservation of the intricate cultural heritage of Tribes with deep-rooted, historical, and continuing connections to the Yellowstone region. The Center stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, representing an extraordinary partnership forged between Yellowstone Forever, Yellowstone National Park, the National Park Service, associated Tribal communities and individuals. During its first two years, the center has brought together over 70 Tribal artists, scholars, educators, and demonstrators, representing over 20 of the park's 27 associated Tribes.



While the Center plays a significant role in honoring and preserving the cultural heritage of Tribes within the Yellowstone region, our collective commitment extends beyond its walls. Through various outreach efforts such as the illuminated teepees hosted in Gardiner, Montana and other Indigenous education and outreach events, we aim to create spaces for cross-cultural exchange, promoting understanding and appreciation among visitors. Additionally, our initiatives act as catalysts for long-term Tribal education and engagement strategies, facilitating meaningful dialogue and partnerships between Tribes and indigenous individuals. Indigenous youth and adult programs offered through the Yellowstone Forever Institute, also provide invaluable opportunities for connection. Sustaining and expanding this vital work necessitates continued funding, which supports not only the operational needs of the Center but also various Tribal engagement events, collaborations, and educational endeavors.

Fundraising Goal: \$240,000



Native American Student Internship Program

This project provides an opportunity for Native American students to gain valuable hands-on experience while collecting resource data for Yellowstone. Native American student interns will participate in education and resource management programs at Yellowstone National Park to assist in maintaining and rehabilitating the park's natural and cultural resources. These interns will work in various focus areas within the park including archeology, fisheries, and youth education programs. Interns will be provided with all necessary training and equipment to carry out typical seasonal activities under the supervision and mentorship of National Park Service employees. This program will provide Native American student participants with

educational opportunities and skill sets that will assist and guide them as they prepare for their careers. The current Native American Student Internship Program, which has been successful in recruiting and training students since its inception in 2010, does not have funding to extend beyond the Summer 2024.



Fundraising Goal: \$112,500

The Next 150 Years: Sustainability in YNP

If we want Yellowstone National Park to be here for another 150 years, we must work together to find ways to be more sustainable—from minimizing impacts on the environment to improving wildlife habitat and efforts to improve energy conservation. Advancing sustainability efforts is key to ensuring the park remains here, forever.

Yellowstone aims to deliver on sustainability goals within the National Park System through support of renewable technologies where feasible; improvements to water

management; reducing fuel use and emissions by transforming the fleet and technologies used in the park; reducing waste and preventing pollution; and adapting infrastructure to a changing climate. In addition to financial support, the park continues to need in-kind donations of other materials in support of these sustainability efforts.

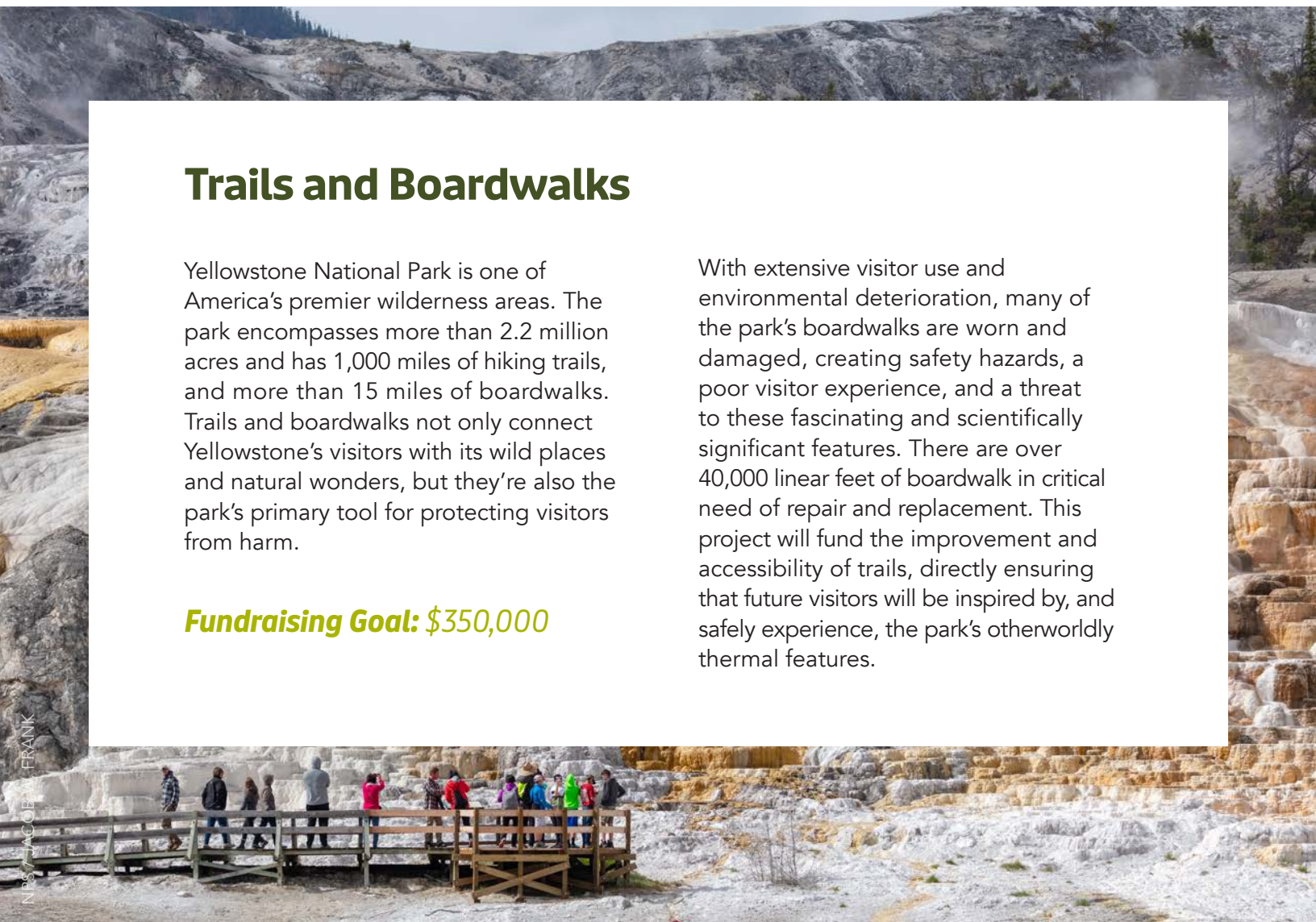
Fundraising Goal: \$700,000

Trails and Boardwalks

Yellowstone National Park is one of America's premier wilderness areas. The park encompasses more than 2.2 million acres and has 1,000 miles of hiking trails, and more than 15 miles of boardwalks. Trails and boardwalks not only connect Yellowstone's visitors with its wild places and natural wonders, but they're also the park's primary tool for protecting visitors from harm.

Fundraising Goal: \$350,000

With extensive visitor use and environmental deterioration, many of the park's boardwalks are worn and damaged, creating safety hazards, a poor visitor experience, and a threat to these fascinating and scientifically significant features. There are over 40,000 linear feet of boardwalk in critical need of repair and replacement. This project will fund the improvement and accessibility of trails, directly ensuring that future visitors will be inspired by, and safely experience, the park's otherworldly thermal features.



Enhance

Resiliency Project

Yellowstone National Park strives to make meaningful improvements to the work-life environments for employees across the park. Yellowstone cannot be protected or managed without a capable and satisfied team—working together—and supporting park staff. Over the last two years, Yellowstone has looked for ways to provide in-park counseling for employees dealing with major incidents such as employee suicides and park fatalities where National Park Service employees are the first responders. Counseling sessions were well attended and feedback from employees recommended increased use of these mental health services.

“This program has helped myself and my coworkers since it started last year. We all live, work, and play with one another so it was imperative to have someone from the outside to talk to. They’ve helped me with work, my family, my coworkers, grief, and also trauma. This is very important to us here at Old Faithful because we’re so removed from the other parts of the park/society.”

— YNP employee



There are several factors that make in-park counseling worthwhile including the ability for employees to speak to counselors face-to-face without needing to travel more than three hours to a nearby community. The professionals brought into the park are trained trauma counselors who are well-suited for engaging with our first responders after significant medical or law enforcement incidents; counselors are familiar with the values and mission-driven mindset of National Park Service employees. In just one year, over 180 employees have already used the counseling services in Yellowstone.

Fundraising Goal: \$95,000

Expedition Yellowstone

For 38 years, Expedition Yellowstone (EY) has provided life-changing experiences for students to learn in one of the world's premiere outdoor classrooms—Yellowstone! Guided by Yellowstone's educational rangers, EY fosters connections to the park and the natural world, encourages teamwork, and individual growth as students challenge themselves to engage with learning outdoors. A curriculum-based, multi-day education program for grades 4-8, EY offers students an opportunity to participate in hands-on learning and create personal connections to Yellowstone. More than ever, students need time outdoors, learning alongside their peers, and space to foster their physical, mental, and emotional health.

School groups are hosted at the historic Lamar Buffalo Ranch and the Youth Conservation Corps facility in Mammoth Hot Springs. Many of these students are from underserved populations and schools that cannot afford a class trip to Yellowstone without financial assistance. The EY scholarship funds allow disproportionately affected students and schools to participate in the program.

Scholarship requests have been increasing and this funding is imperative to support regional schools' participation. An immersive experience in nature and in a wonderland such as Yellowstone can be life-changing and impact students for years to come.



Fundraising Goal: \$100,000

Youth Conservation Corps

Yellowstone's Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) program is focused on training and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders through work projects, outdoor recreation, and education. The program allows youth, ages 15-18, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage in work-based learning projects and leadership education programs while living in the park. During the month-long program, participants' personal development is broadened and enriched through educational, leadership, and recreational experiences. Additionally, YCC completes much needed conservation and deferred maintenance projects. Through this residential leadership program, teenagers depart with newfound confidence as well as skills to guide them on their life journey.



Fundraising Goal: \$150,000

Yellowstone to You - Distance Learning and Outreach

The *Yellowstone to You* program provides in-person education and outreach programs to regional communities and distance learning opportunities for schools across the country and around the world that lack resources to visit the park. Staff implement outreach programs at schools, community, and Tribal events. This program helps engage a younger and more diverse audience and connects students to Yellowstone. Distance learning is one of the least expensive ways to expand the park's reach and grow the next generation of respectful park visitors,



stewards, and advocates through curriculum-based virtual lessons. The primary goal of *Yellowstone to You* is to help foster the next generation of park stewards and advocates by meeting people where they are, whether or not they ever visit Yellowstone National Park in person.

Fundraising Goal: \$75,000

Junior Ranger Program

Each year, approximately 100,000 children, families, and the young-at-heart participate in Yellowstone's world-renowned Junior Ranger Program. To earn the coveted Junior Ranger badge, participants learn about Yellowstone's wildlife, geology, ecosystem, history, and contemporary challenges through a workbook with engaging and interactive educational content. For over 30 years, this self-paced learning program has educated visitors of all ages. Funding is needed to continue this program in Yellowstone, including to print the Junior Ranger activity books, purchase badges and accessories, and maintain supplies for the program.

Fundraising Goal: \$100,000



Updated & Renovated Exhibits

A trip to Yellowstone undoubtedly includes a visit to one of the park's eight visitor centers. Driving through the park often means pulling over to read educational roadside signs. Yellowstone's extensive parkwide exhibits and roadside signage are read by millions of visitors annually. But, like all physical infrastructure, exhibits require repairs, renovation, and updating. Funding for this project includes repairs and replacements of exhibits at Canyon, Old Faithful, and Norris Geyser Basin visitor centers, as well as other wayside exhibits.



Fundraising Goal: \$100,000

A large elk with impressive antlers stands in a forest clearing, looking directly at the camera. The elk is brown with dark legs and a dark face. Its antlers are large and light-colored, with several points. The background is a dense forest of green trees and foliage. The foreground is slightly blurred, showing more greenery and some fallen logs.

Visitor & Wildlife Safety

Millions of visitors swarm to Yellowstone National Park each year. With unsurpassed national park visitation, it is more important than ever to manage the coexistence of people and wildlife in Yellowstone. Natural seasonal events such as elk and bison calving in spring, the bison rut in summer, and the elk rut in autumn are drawing large crowds as word spreads via social media about these spectacular seasonal displays of wildlife. This project provides support for seasonal park rangers and volunteers who educate visitors about wildlife and safety at roadside wildlife jams, at overlooks and impromptu viewing events, along self-guiding trails, and in developed areas. These seasonal park rangers are imperative to help reduce injuries, prevent fatalities, and maintain wildlife in their natural habitat.

Fundraising Goal: \$100,000

Digital Media Innovation

As visitors to Yellowstone National Park become increasingly more reliant on technology, the importance of reaching audiences with digital media continues to grow. To provide a first-class visitor experience, it's imperative to utilize state-of-the-art digital media to communicate important safety information, establish connections, and continue the relationship with visitors long after they go home. With over 7.7 million visits to the Yellowstone website, 6.6 million visits to the Yellowstone mobile app, and 3.2 million visitors interacting with digital media in the park, it's easy to see how big of an impact digital media can have on the park visitor. A focus on digital media updates and innovation will ensure that we maximize the potential for connections with every one of those 17.5 million visits. This funding will continue to provide satellite internet service to the Old Faithful livestream webcam, which is consistently one of the most-visited webpages in the entire National Park Service, as well as other equipment and upgrades to visitor centers and amphitheaters throughout the park.



Fundraising Goal: \$50,000



Photo Credits

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