

WELCOME

If you are a newcomer to the YF Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits you during your program. Our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality, immersive educational experience, in addition to a memorable visit to the world's first national park.

Yellowstone Forever benefits from the hard work and generosity of volunteer program assistants. You will likely meet the program volunteers assisting your program. Program assistants receive professional training in Wilderness First Aid, emergency response, and bus driving. Additionally, they help with program logistics, cleaning and maintenance of facilities, and anything you might need during your time with us.

Your program includes tuition and transportation during your program. It does not include transportation to the park, lodging, or food.

The following information is provided to help you prepare for your program. Please read it thoroughly and call us at 406-848-2400 extension 3 or email institute@yellowstone.org if you have any questions. For specific class details, including an agenda, a letter from the instructor, class-specific equipment, and a recommended reading list, see the webpage for your specific course.

We recommend all first-time visitors seek general park information through the National Park Service at 307-344-2107 or www.nps.gov/yell.



LODGING & MEALS

Lodging



Lodging at the Yellowstone Overlook Field Campus may be available on a case-by-case basis. If available, there are a limited number of rooms available. For additional information, including availability, reach out to YF directly at [yellowstone.org](https://www.yellowstone.org).

You can find more information about booking your own Gardiner-based lodging during this course here: <https://www.visitgardinermt.com/plan-your-trip/tourism-directory/lodging>

Meals

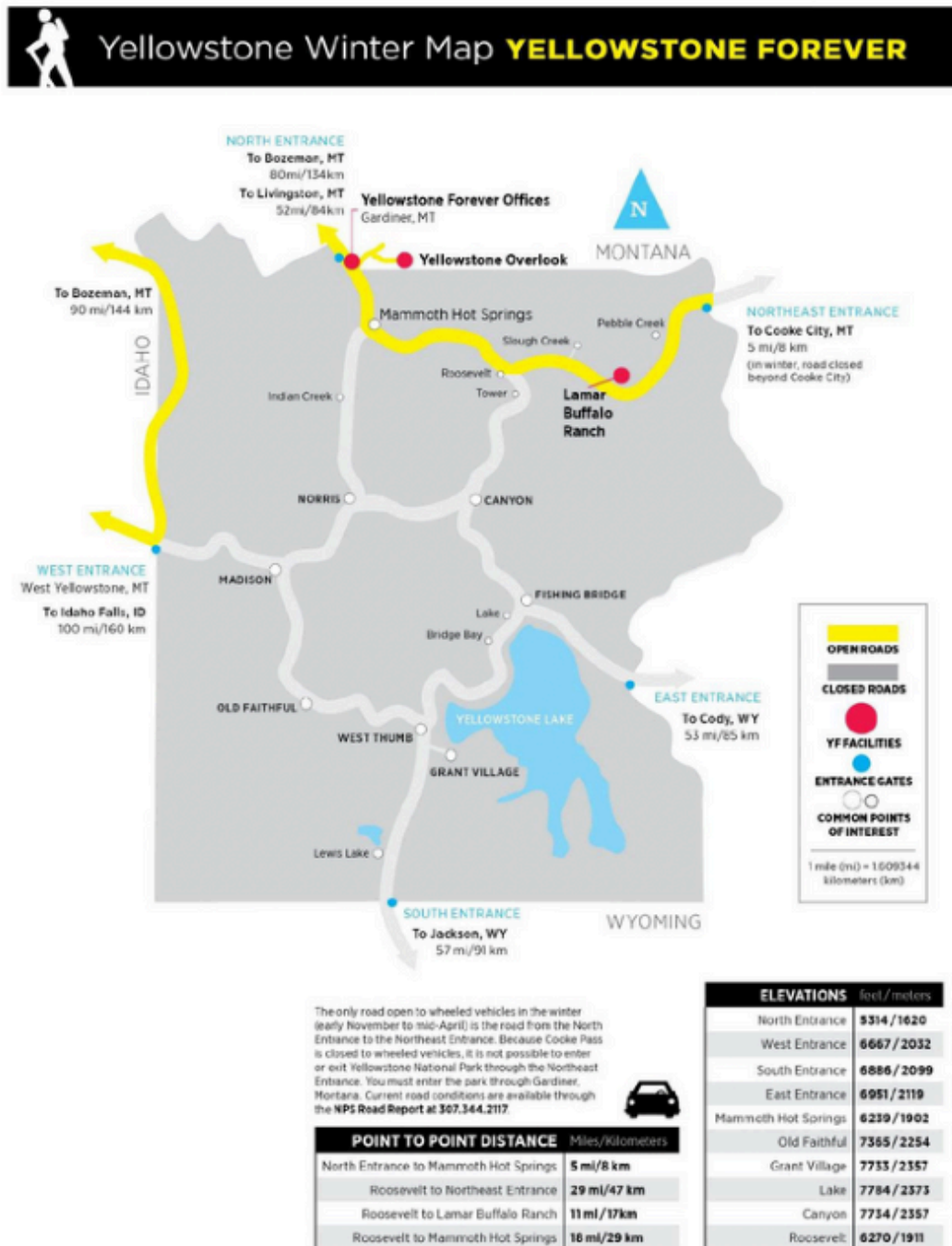
Meals, snacks, and drinks are not provided for winter Field Seminar programs. You will need to bring your own food, and it should be able to easily travel in the field with you.

Gardiner has a grocery store and some restaurants remain open during the winter season. All programs begin at the Yellowstone Forever classrooms where there are water fountains to fill your bottles before heading out into the field. In addition, there are restroom facilities to use at the classrooms.



DIRECTIONS

The address for the Gardiner, MT Yellowstone Forever office is:
308 W Park St. – Gardiner, MT – 59030



Prior to leaving always check park road conditions and closures at <https://www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/conditions.htm> or call 307-344-2117 for recorded information.

ACTIVITY LEVELS

Program Fitness Level Expectations

Each course is classified in difficulty with a 1 to 5 rating.

Level 1: Be prepared for leisurely hikes up to 1 mile per day through relatively flat terrain on maintained or snow-packed trails.

Level 2: Be prepared to hike on snow-packed trails, or snowshoe or ski trips, up to 3 miles per day with climbs up to 250 feet.

Level 3: Be prepared for brisk hiking, snowshoeing, or skiing up to 5 miles per day with climbs up to 500 feet, including some trail-breaking in snow.

Level 4: Be prepared to for brisk aerobic snowshoeing or skiing up to 8 miles per day with climbs up to 1,000 feet; or steep, rugged, off-trail skiing or snowshoeing – including breaking trail in variable snow conditions.

Level 5: Be prepared for brisk aerobic snowshoeing or skiing up to 12 miles per day with climbs up to 1,500 feet; or steep, rugged, off-trail skiing or snowshoeing – including breaking trail in variable snow conditions.

All field activities will be conducted as a group. If a student cannot meet the activity level expectations during their program, they may be restricted from participation in daily outings. We will not alter program itineraries or activities to accommodate participants who cannot meet the expectations of the stated activity level. Additionally, it is possible that programs will not hit or exceed the classified difficulty, however, participants must BE PREPARED to do so.

To see the difficulty level and fitness expectations for a particular course, see that class's course letter and registration page. To best prepare, we recommend beginning an exercise program right away. Participants residing at lower elevations may want to arrive a day early to adjust to the altitude. To learn more about how specific medical conditions can be affected by Yellowstone's environment and our activities, visit

www.yellowstone.org/health-information.

WHAT TO BRING

Suggested Packing List

Below are suggested items to bring to all Field Seminar Programs. For equipment and clothing specific to a course, please see the course webpage. Additionally, Yellowstone Forever field staff assigned to there program will carry a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.

Equipment

- Hand Sanitizer
- Daypack, with enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, etc.
- Water bottle, for hiking programs, it is recommended to bring at least two liters of water with you for the day's activities
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen/Lip protector, sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly
- Journal & pen
- Optics, camera and binoculars

Clothing

- Insulating underwear, capilene, polypropylene, wool, or similar wicking fabric
- Midweight insulating layer, a light synthetic fleece or wool shirt/pullover
- Heavyweight insulating layer, wool, down, or heavy-weight fleece jacket
- Waterproof and windproof outer layer, lightweight and breathable, jackets and pants
- Pants, wool, fleece pants are preferred, no cotton
- Hat, an insulating hat that covers ears
- Gloves, lightweight glove liners and a pair of wool/fleece gloves or mittens – waterproof/windproof outer layer is recommended
- Socks, lightweight liner with heavyweight synthetic or wool socks
- Gaiters, knee-high to keep snow out of your boots
- Insulated boots should have water repellent layers outside, thick insulation inside, and be large enough to fit over thick socks. Soles with proper traction or traction devices (i.e. Yaktrax) are essential for icy conditions.

CANCELLATION POLICY

PLEASE READ THIS POLICY BEFORE REGISTERING FOR PROGRAMS

Once registered for a program, registration is subject to our cancellation policy.

Please visit our website [here](#) for details regarding our Cancellation & Refund policy.

To guard against unexpected circumstances, we strongly advise purchasing travel insurance to protect against loss should you have to cancel your registration.

All programs are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.



CODE OF ETHICS

The Yellowstone Forever Institute is committed to demonstrating a high standard of appropriate and ethical behavior in Yellowstone. As a participant in a Yellowstone Forever Institute program, we ask all students to adhere to the following Code of Ethics. In addition to the ethics highlighted below, the Yellowstone Forever Institute abides by all National Park Service rules and regulations. We also practice Leave No Trace guidelines for traveling responsibly in the wilderness.

Observing Wildlife

We will do our best to have as little impact on wildlife as possible. Animals will be observed from a distance, using high-powered spotting scopes to help keep our presence from affecting their behavior. Participants should not expect to get close-up photographs of wildlife. The Yellowstone Forever Institute will adhere to National Park Service regulations by keeping a minimum distance of 25 yards from bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, coyotes, and nesting birds and 100 yards from bears and wolves. We will not entice wildlife with food, animal calls, or any actions that change their behavior.



Leave What You Find

It is illegal to remove natural or cultural artifacts (plants, animals, bones, rocks, etc.) from Yellowstone. Yellowstone Forever Institute instructors have permission from the National Park Service to manipulate plants, rocks, bones, etc. for educational purposes and will return them to their natural positions and locations.

General Etiquette

Yellowstone Forever Institute groups will be considerate of other visitors and respect the quality of their experience. Voices and vehicle sounds carry great distances and affect both wildlife and people—remaining silent or very quiet while watching wildlife lets the sounds of Yellowstone (including wolf howls) prevail.

Roads and Vehicles

Expect wildlife on the road, and drive at or below the posted park speed limits. When stopping to observe wildlife or other park features, the Yellowstone Forever Institute will move vehicles entirely off the road. If there is no safe pullout available, we will drive to the next safe place and walk back to observe the wildlife. We will not stop in the middle of the road, and should a traffic jam develop as a result of our activities, we will cease the activity.



Properly Dispose of Waste

We will pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Your instructor will discuss techniques for properly disposing of human waste in the field.

Traveling Lightly

When hiking or walking in Yellowstone, we will use existing trails and boardwalks. We will follow appropriate techniques when walking off-trail. Walking around muddy or wet places in the trail increases erosion and negatively affects the resource; proper equipment is essential to hiking ethically. Participants should come adequately prepared with the equipment listed for their program and should expect to walk through mud, snow, or puddles in the trail.

YELLOWSTONE FOREVER



**YELLOWSTONE
FOREVER**

Our Mission

Yellowstone Forever protects, preserves, and enhances Yellowstone National Park through education and philanthropy.

Yellowstone Forever builds upon the nearly 100-year legacy that began in 1933 with the Yellowstone Library and Museum Association. We connect people to the park through outstanding educational programs. We raise money to fund priority projects that protect Yellowstone's ecosystem and wildlife, preserve the park's heritage, history & trails, and enhance visitor education and experiences. We offer educational programs for visitors of all ages through the Yellowstone Forever Institute, and operate 10 educational Park Stores in and around Yellowstone.

Our vision is that Yellowstone National Park endures forever.

Supporter Program & Retail Stores

Yellowstone Forever Supporters directly fund priority park programs and projects. Benefits include early registration and discounts for Yellowstone Forever Institute programs and discounts on retail purchases throughout Yellowstone (exclusions apply). For more information, visit: yellowstone.org/ways-to-give/member-benefits/

Our Park Stores feature more than 900 books, maps, and videos to help you plan your visit, along with a wide selection of shirts, hats, and other logo items to remind you of your visit to Yellowstone. Yellowstone Forever supporters receive a 15% discount on merchandise online or at any of our 10 locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone. To make purchases, visit: shop.yellowstone.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What airport should someone fly into?

A. The closest commercial airline airport is Bozeman, MT.

Q. Does YF offer a shuttle service?

A. Yellowstone Forever does not currently have a shuttle service available for Gardiner courses.

Q. How does one communicate with the instructor before the class?

A. All questions and communication about the program can be directed at the Instructor, who will reach out to you first. For general questions please contact us at 406-848-2400 extension 3 or institute@yellowstone.org

Q. Are instructors tips included in the program payment?

A. Gratuities for the instructors are not included but are recommended and greatly appreciated.