WILD YELLOWSTONE | TRACKS TO TALONS

The *Wild Yellowstone: Tracks to Talons* Lodging & Learning package focuses on the diverse and vibrant wildlife that calls this iconic landscape home. Dive into the world of Yellowstone's top predators. Track wolves, bears, and other carnivores as they roam their natural habitats, learning about their behaviors, hunting strategies, and roles in the ecosystem. Then explore the lives of Yellowstone's majestic ungulates. From bison and elk to bighorn sheep and pronghorn, witness these herbivores in their natural settings and understand their migration patterns and grazing habits. Conclude your adventure with a day dedicated to the park's avian wonders. Engage in birdwatching activities, identify various bird species, and discover the unique adaptations and migratory journeys of Yellowstone's feathered friends.

Short hikes may also be sprinkled through the entire trip to provide for an immersive experience. A Yellowstone field educator will ensure all logistics are accounted for while providing high quality interpretation of observations. Each evening, participants will return to their comfortable accommodations at the Canyon Lodge.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- **4 nights lodging**
  - 4 nights lodging at Canyon Lodge - Deluxe Rooms
- **Most meals, to include:**
  - 3 breakfasts (to-go)
  - 3 lunches (to-go)
- **In-park transportation via a 14-passenger minibus**
- **Exceptional educational programming with a Yellowstone Forever field educator**
- **A Nalgene water bottle (gift item)**
- **High powered scopes and binoculars**
- **Field equipment (as needed)**

Gratuities for the Yellowstone Forever Field Educators are not included in the program costs but are recommended and greatly appreciated.

The first evening includes an informative orientation with a Yellowstone Forever field educator. The following three full days involve early departures to search for wildlife in their natural habitats. Afternoons are spent exploring ecosystems and hiking out to examine tracks and other animals sign. Participants will likely encounter many wildlife species during daily outings, where field educators will discuss the role these animals play in the ecosystem.

Most sightings of wildlife occur at a distance; the field educator will provide high-powered spotting scopes and binoculars for group use.

PHOTO MATT LUDIN

WHY CHOOSE A LODGING & LEARNING PROGRAM?

These award-winning Lodging & Learning packages are developed through a partnership with Yellowstone National Park Lodges and Yellowstone Forever. These packages combine the best lodging locations with an exceptional immersive field education experience.

PHOTOS AMANDA EVANS

HERE'S WHY THIS PACKAGE STANDS OUT:

• **Yellowstone Forever is Yellowstone National Park's official nonprofit education and fundraising partner.** Yellowstone Forever's mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance Yellowstone National Park through education and philanthropy. *To learn more about Yellowstone Forever, visit our website,* Yellowstone.org.

• **Support Yellowstone National Park.** Proceeds collected by Yellowstone Forever educational programs are used to preserve Yellowstone National Park and provide more opportunities for people to experience its magic.

• **Yellowstone Forever Field Educators are formally trained.** The Yellowstone Institute has been providing in-depth educational programs in Yellowstone for over 40 years. Yellowstone Forever field educators are among the best experts in Yellowstone. Educational staff are passionate professionals with significant training who are dedicating their careers to this vital work. They live in the Yellowstone ecosystem, they work and train alongside park researchers and educators, and thus can provide accurate and exciting behind-the-scenes perspectives on the park's natural and cultural history. They know where to go and when, and they handle all the details to make the experience as enjoyable as possible.

• **Small group size.** Lodging & Learning programs have a max capacity of 14. The program capacity size allows participants to enjoy camaraderie with fellow participants and receive more attention in a small group setting. It allows the educator to take an inquiry-based approach to learning and tailor the experience to the group's specific interests.

• **Essential equipment provided.** Yellowstone Forever provides high-quality scoping equipment to bring distant wildlife into crisp, clear view. Educators are at a minimum Wilderness First Aid certified. They carry a first aid kit and handheld radio during all outings and provide bear spray to participants if hiking in bear country. Additionally, they incorporate teaching aids such as skulls, tracks, pelts, books, and test equipment such as temperature guns for thermal features.

• **Incredible in-park lodging.** All lodging in this package is in the park, within short walking distance from popular features and spectacular scenery. This allows more time in the evenings.

PROGRAM ITINERARY

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.

PHOTOS SAM ARCHIBALD

DAY 1 **WELCOME & ORIENTATION**

You are welcome to check into the Canyon Lodge beginning at 4:00 p.m. After checking in, guests will meet a Yellowstone Forever field educator for an orientation. Education staff will go over the program itinerary, discuss clothing and equipment needed for daily outings, and answer any questions participants may have.

7:00 p.m. **Meet for orientation**
Specific room to be determined; ask front desk for directions.

DAY 2 **YELLOWSTONE'S PREDATORS**

We will head out early for wildlife watching over Dunraven Pass and in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley. We will travel along Yellowstone's northern range in search of Yellowstone's carnivores. After viewing wildlife, you will be led on a hike while discussing ecology, behavior, recent research, and management.

6:00 a.m. **Depart Canyon Lodge**
Box breakfast in the field
Morning roadside animal viewing
Deli lunch in the field
Afternoon hike in wildlife habitat & scene investigation

2:00 p.m. **Return to Canyon Lodge**

DAY 3 **HOOVED YELLOWSTONE**

The herds of Yellowstone will dictate our travel day today with the group most likely ending up in Hayden or Lamar Valley. We will head out in search of Yellowstone's hoofed animals from bison to elk and bighorn sheep to pronghorn, we will discuss their migration patterns and the impact of keystone species on the landscape.

6:00 a.m. **Depart Canyon Lodge**
Hot beverages & box breakfast in the field
Follow the herd (wildlife watching)
Deli lunch in the field
Afternoon activity
Tracking tutorial

2:00 p.m. **Return to Canyon Lodge**

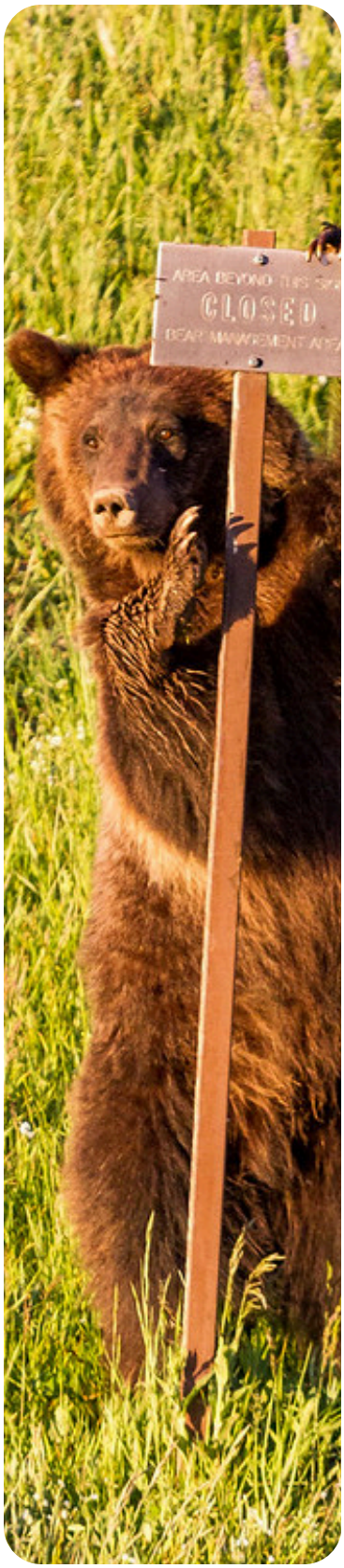


PHOTO MATT LUDIN

DAY 4 **BIRDING UNDER BIG SKIES**

On the final day, we will conclude our wildlife week with a day dedicated to Yellowstone's avian wonders. We will engage in birdwatching activities, identifying various bird species, and discussing how to spot, identify, and sound id birds through different techniques. Discover the unique adaptations and migratory journeys of Yellowstone's feathered friends.

6:30 a.m. **Depart Canyon Lodge**
Box breakfast in the field
Birdwatching & Identification Techniques
Deli lunch in the field

Afternoon Species Review & Closing

2:00 p.m. **Return Canyon Lodge**

DAY 5 **CHECK OUT AND DEPARTURE**

PHOTO JACOB W. FRANK

ACTIVITY LEVEL

HOW FIT DO YOU NEED TO BE?

• This program is rated **LEVEL 2 - MILD** on Yellowstone Forever's Activity Level Scale.

• Participants should be prepared to hike up to 3 miles per day comfortably with elevation gains of up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking is possible. Most activities will take place at elevations between 7,200 to 8,000 feet. 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, please visit our site page on health information.

• All field activities will be conducted as a group. If members of the group cannot participate in the day's activities, they need to let the educator know in advance.

To participate in this program, each participant must fill out and sign a health questionnaire and assumption of risk waiver. These forms must be completed and returned at least 30 days prior to the program start date.

WHOM TO CONTACT

For any questions, concerns, or additional information, please contact the following:

• Reservations, lodging, food, and payment questions, contact Yellowstone National Park Lodges at reserve-ynp@xanterra.com or 307-344-7311

• Program itinerary, health forms, and activity questions, contact Yellowstone Forever at institute@yellowstone.org or 406-848-2400 extension 3

• Road updates, park conditions, and general park information, contact Yellowstone National Park Service at https://www.nps.gov/yell/contacts.htm

PHOTO JACOB W. FRANK

PHOTO MATT LUDIN

GENERAL EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING LIST

Much of the program time will be spent outdoors, and participants should be prepared for a variety of mountain weather conditions and temperatures. Appropriate clothing, equipment, and footwear are important. Summer temperatures can range from below freezing in the mornings to 85° Fahrenheit in the afternoons. The layered use of garments for protection against the wind, sun, and temperature extremes should guide clothing choices.

**The Field Educator will be carrying a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.*

PHOTOS MATT LUDIN

EQUIPMENT

- **Daypack**, with enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, etc.
- **Water bottle**, participants will receive a Nalgene water bottle as a gift during the program orientation. Guests should always keep a minimum of one quart of water on hand to facilitate proper hydration.
- **Sunglasses**
- **Sunscreen/Lip protector**, sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly
- **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
- **Short-sleeve shirt**, cotton is okay in summer, but synthetic, wicking shirts are ideal

Pants, synthetic hiking pants – jeans are not recommended

- **Hat**, both a brimmed sun hat and an insulating hat for cool weather
- **Gloves**, lightweight glove liners and a pair of wool/ fleece gloves or mittens
- **Socks**, specifically designed for hiking, that wick moisture
- **Hiking boots that provide stability and traction**, make sure they are broken in, comfortable, and do not cause hot spots or blisters
- **Off-duty shoes**, sandals, athletic shoes, or other leisure footwear

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

The following policies apply to Lodging & Learning packages. If you cancel:

• 60 days or more prior to the start of your package, 100% of your payment will be refunded.

• 30 days or more prior to the start of your package, 50% of your payment will be refunded.

• If you cancel with fewer than 30 days before the start of your program, your full payment will be forfeited.

Please call the Yellowstone National Park Lodges Reservations Office at 307-344-7311 to cancel.

We recommend the purchase of travel insurance to help protect you against financial loss if you must cancel or interrupt your trip due to unforeseen circumstances.

PHOTO JACOB FRANK

ABOUT YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

PARK STORES

Yellowstone Forever park stores feature more than 900 books, maps, and videos to help participants plan their visit, along with a wide selection of shirts, hats, and other logo items. Yellowstone Forever members receive a 15% discount on merchandise or at any of the locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone.

Visit: **shop.yellowstone.org**

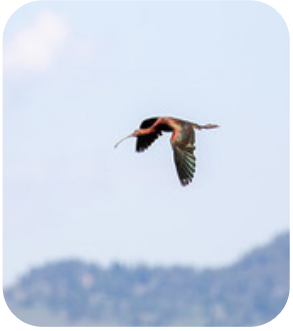


PHOTO ASHTON HOOKER

PHOTO JACOB FRANK

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Yellowstone Forever members directly fund visitor education and park preservation. Benefits include:

• 15% discount on merchandise at all Park Store locations, including the online store, Yellowstone National Park Lodges gift shop and Yellowstone General Stores. Exclusions apply.

• Discounts at over 400 participating public land stores across the country.

• A library card for the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center.

For more information about becoming a Yellowstone supporter, visit:

Yellowstone.org/ways-to-give/member-benefits/.

CODE OF ETHICS

Yellowstone Forever is committed to demonstrating a high standard of appropriate and ethical behavior in Yellowstone. As a participant on a Yellowstone Forever program, participants will adhere to the following Code of Ethics. In addition to the ethics highlighted below, the Yellowstone Forever abides by all National Park Service rules and regulations, in addition to practicing Leave No Trace guidelines for traveling responsibly in the wilderness.

OBSERVING WILDLIFE

Groups will do their 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 the group presence from affecting their behavior. Participants should not expect to get close-up photographs of wildlife. Yellowstone Forever adheres 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. Wildlife will not be enticed 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 educators 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 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, Yellowstone Forever field educators will move vehicles entirely off the road. If there is no safe pullout available, educators will drive to the next safe place and walk back to observe the wildlife. Yellowstone Forever will not stop in the middle of the road and should a traffic jam develop because of the group's activities, the activity will cease.

PHOTO JACOB FRANK

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WASTE

Participants will pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Field Educators will discuss techniques for properly disposing of human waste in the field.

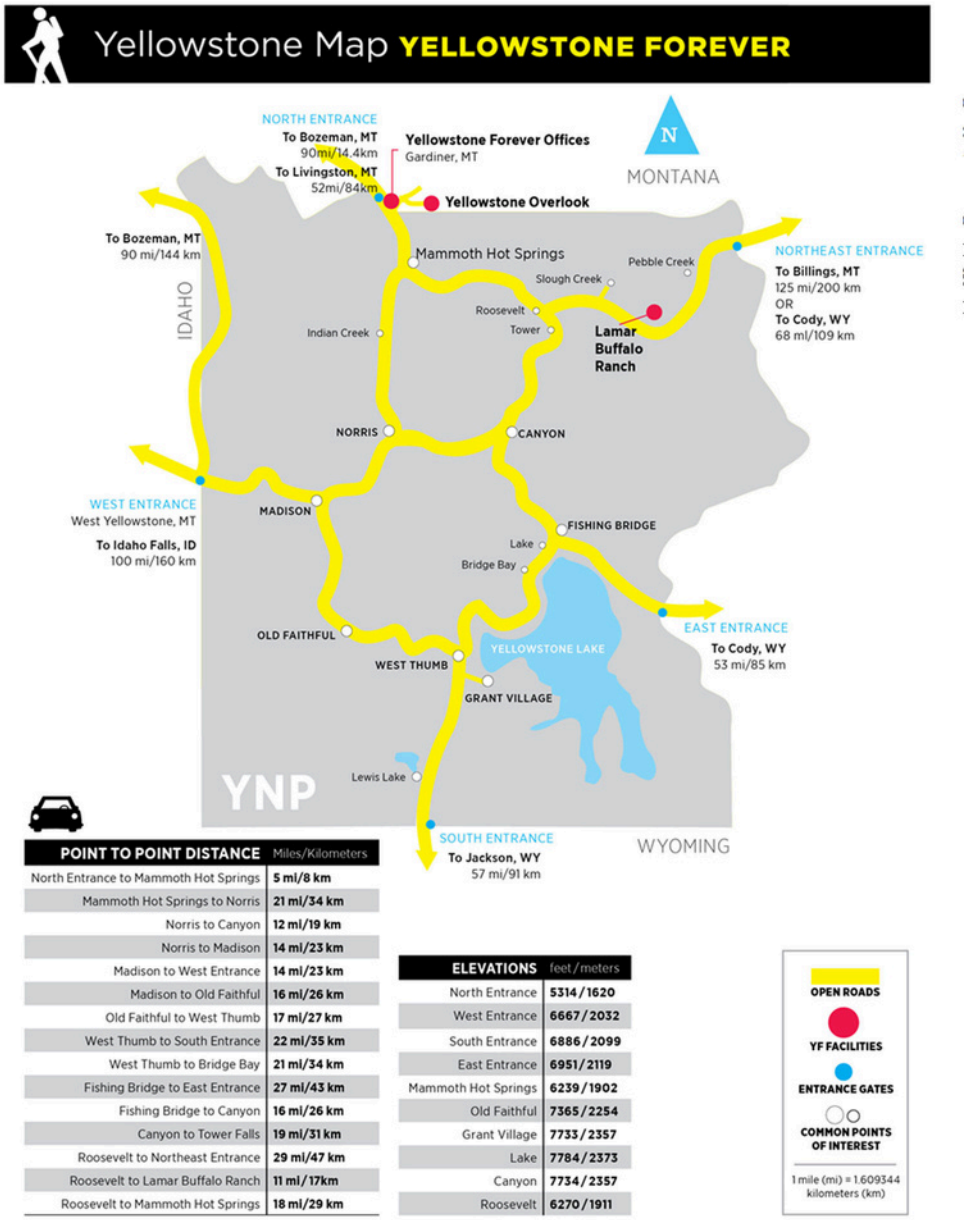
TRAVELING LIGHTLY

When hiking or walking Yellowstone, groups will use existing trails and boardwalks. Hikers 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 the program and should expect to walk through mud, snow, or puddles in the trail.

MAP

Plan on extra driving time in the park, the speed limit is 45 mph or lower and road conditions can vary. There may also be construction delays.

Visit www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/hours.htm, call the recorded NPS Road Report at **307-344-2117**, or contact a visitor center for up-to-date travel information.



POINT TO POINT DISTANCE	Miles/Kilometers
North Entrance to Mammoth Hot Springs	5 mi/8 km
Mammoth Hot Springs to Norris	21 mi/34 km
Norris to Canyon	12 mi/19 km
Norris to Madison	14 mi/23 km
Madison to West Entrance	14 mi/23 km
Madison to Old Faithful	16 mi/26 km
Old Faithful to West Thumb	17 mi/27 km
West Thumb to South Entrance	22 mi/35 km
West Thumb to Bridge Bay	21 mi/34 km
Fishing Bridge to East Entrance	27 mi/43 km
Fishing Bridge to Canyon	16 mi/26 km
Canyon to Tower Falls	19 mi/31 km
Roosevelt to Northeast Entrance	29 mi/47 km
Roosevelt to Lamar Buffalo Ranch	11 mi/17km
Roosevelt to Mammoth Hot Springs	18 mi/29 km

ELEVATIONS	feet/meters
North Entrance	5314/1620
West Entrance	6667/2032
South Entrance	6886/2099
East Entrance	6951/2119
Mammoth Hot Springs	6239/1902
Old Faithful	7365/2254
Grant Village	7733/2357
Lake	7784/2373
Canyon	7734/2357
Roosevelt	6270/1911