



# YELLOWSTONE FOREVER

## BECOMING A CERTIFIED INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

### Course Letter

FIELD SEMINAR - FALL 2024

**INSTRUCTOR:** Amanda Evans, Yellowstone Forever Lead Field Educator and NAI Certified Interpretive Guide Trainer, with guest speakers from Yellowstone Forever and the National Park Service.

The Yellowstone Institute has been providing in-depth educational programs in Yellowstone for over 40 years. Our field educators are among the best expert naturalist guides in Yellowstone. They're professionals with training credentials who are dedicating their careers to this vital work. They live in the Yellowstone ecosystem, they work alongside park researchers, and thus can provide accurate and exciting "behind the scenes" perspectives on the park's history, management, geology, flora, and fauna.

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** This course is an activity **level 2**. We may hike up to 3 miles in a day, with elevation gains up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking possible. Please reach out to the instructor with any concerns about the activity level.

**LOCATION:** Course begins at the Yellowstone Forever classrooms located in Gardiner, MT, located on the east side of the Yellowstone Forever Headquarters building at 308 W Park St.

**PROGRAM DATES & TIMES:** The program begins at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, October 14, 2024, and ends on Friday, October 18, 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](mailto: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:** You will need to bring your own food; on some days lunch may need to be able to travel in the field with you.

For general information about the facilities, preparing for classes, what to expect, cancellation policies, and more, please see the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document.

## FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

The Yellowstone Forever Institute, in partnership with the National Association for Interpretation, is pleased to offer a professional certification course for individuals who will be delivering interpretive programs or having public contact at interpretive sites such as visitor centers, nature centers, parks, museums, zoos, or guide companies.

The nationally recognized Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) program is designed for anyone in the interpretive field. Whether you're a new hire, a professional looking to refresh your skills, or beginning a second career, this program aids you in improving your presentation and communication techniques. The program combines both the theoretical foundations of the profession with practical strategies in delivering quality interpretive programming to visitors. CIG students are required to attend all sessions of the workshop, prepare a written outline of a 10-minute thematic presentation, and deliver the presentation during the workshop. Though most work is done during the day, some evening time may be needed to accomplish certification requirements.

We start at 8:00 a.m. and end by 5:00 p.m. each day except the second day of the program, which starts at 6:45 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. Most days we will take an hour for lunch, and there is free time for exploring the park most evenings. Local dining options are limited. There is a small, well-stocked grocery store in town, and students can either bring a lunch each day or to eat out in Gardiner. Depending on interpretive program opportunities in the area, we may rearrange our schedule to hold an evening session. Friday will be spent delivering and watching 10-minute presentations from students. Each person will receive feedback from the instructor and have the option to receive feedback from classmates.

October is the perfect time for wildlife watching in the park and students take advantage of this Tuesday morning while on an interpretive field trip on Yellowstone's northern range. We may have the opportunity to witness part of the fall raptor migration or hear the shrill bugle of an elk — all while overlaying our interpretive skills on how to engage visitors in this complex ecosystem.

This program includes:

- Foundational principles of professional interpretation
- Specific techniques to make your programs personal, organized, enjoyable, thematic, relevant, and creative
- Outdoor sessions focused on informal interpretation (nature hikes, touch tables, etc.)
- Indoor sessions that include interactive group activities and discussions
- One-on-one coaching with a certified trainer
- Opportunities to observe professional interpreters in Yellowstone National Park
- One wildlife watching morning on Yellowstone's northern range
- All materials, course workbook, certification details, and NAI membership

This program is offered in Gardiner, Montana, located at the North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Gardiner, a small community of 800, offers world-class wildlife watching and many geothermal features nearby. Some program sessions are held on the trail (weather permitting) while others are held in the classroom. Sessions require full participation, allowing for engaging and informative interactions with fellow students.

The classroom is located at the side entrance of the Yellowstone Forever Gardiner offices. Due to the intensive nature of the workshop and the park's large size, exploration of areas more removed from the Gardiner/Mammoth area are on your own. Consider planning an extra day or two to view the wonders Yellowstone offers.

Looking forward to meeting you soon!

Amanda Evans

[aevans@yellowstone.org](mailto:aevans@yellowstone.org)

### PROGRAM EQUIPMENT

For a full list of recommended equipment for all courses see the [Gardiner Field Seminars - Summer General Information](#) document. *Please note that because registration is through NAI, the cancellation policy may be different than listed.*

**Please bring a notebook and writing utensils, as well as one item of significance that may be passed around the class.**

### RECOMMENDED READING

No prior reading is required, but participants might enjoy the following publications, that complement the program. They will be available to borrow from our library for your use during the workshop.

#### Books:

- *Gifts of Interpretation* by Beck & Cable
- *Interpretation: Making a Difference on Purpose* by Sam Ham
- *Personal Interpretation* by Brochu & Merriman
- *Interpreting for Park Visitors* by William J. Lewis
- *Interpreting Our Heritage* by Freeman Tilden

### WHOM TO CONTACT

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

- Program itinerary, health forms, lodging, and activity questions please contact Yellowstone Forever at [institute@yellowstone.org](mailto: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