



Gardiner Based Programs

Winter General Information

Join us in Yellowstone National Park!

Come join the Yellowstone Forever Institute for a Field Seminar beginning in Gardiner, Montana, the gateway to Yellowstone National Park! If you are a newcomer to the Yellowstone Forever Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits your day of exploration on your Field Seminar. Our goal is to provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality, educational experience and a safe and memorable visit to Yellowstone.



The following information is provided to help you prepare for your program. Please read it thoroughly and call us at [406-848-2400](tel:406-848-2400) or email institute@yellowstone.org if you have any questions.

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

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What to Expect

Yellowstone Forever Institute programs and facilities benefit from the hard work and generosity of volunteer program assistants. You will likely meet one, or more, of the program assistants during 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.

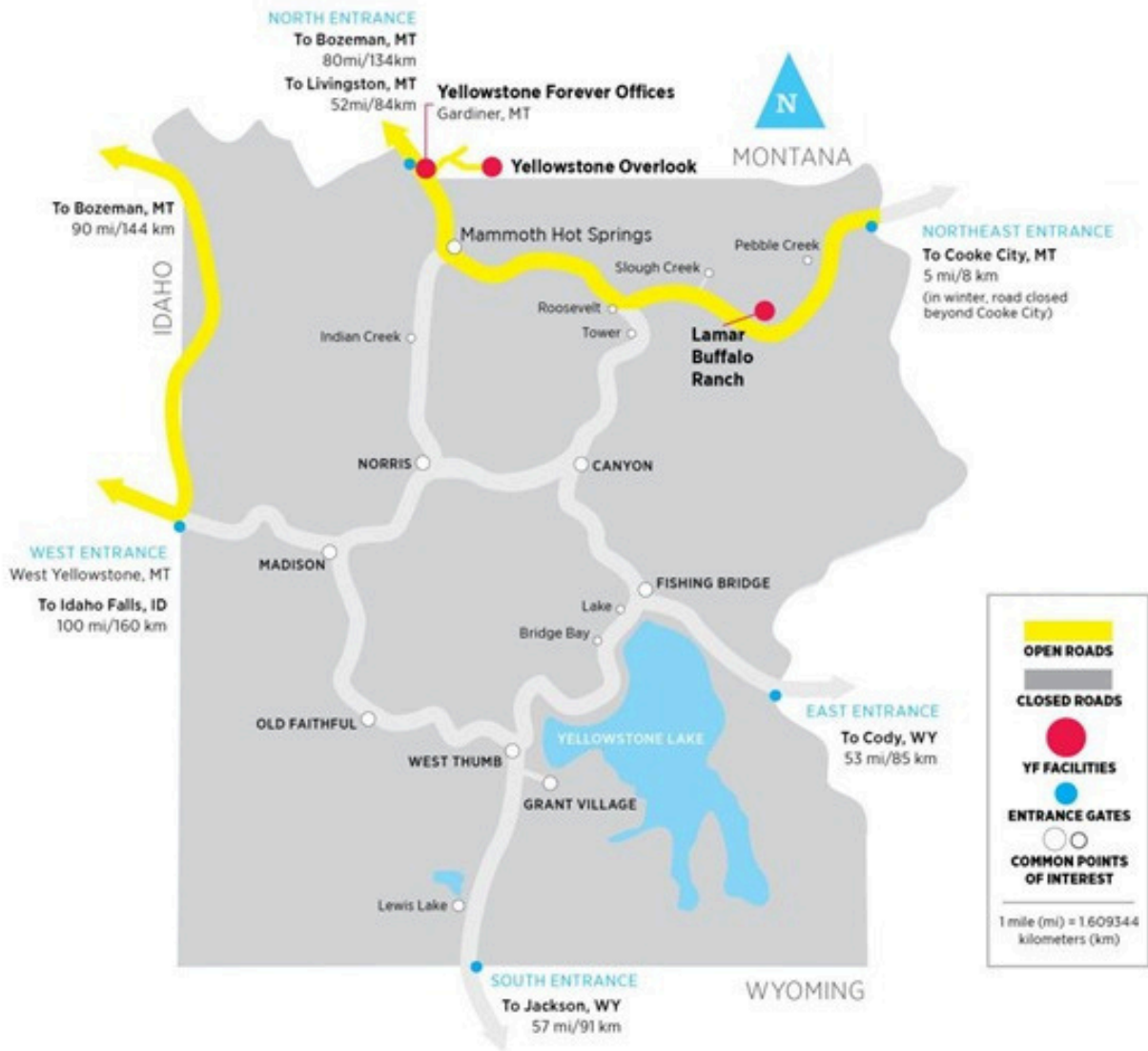
Your class payment includes tuition and transportation during your program. It does not include transportation to the park, lodging, and instructor gratuities.

For specific class details, including an agenda, a letter from the instructor, class-specific equipment, and a recommended reading list, see the course letter.



Directions

Yellowstone Winter Map **YELLOWSTONE FOREVER**



The only road open to wheeled vehicles in the winter (early November to mid-April) is the road from the North Entrance to the Northeast Entrance. Because Cooke Pass is closed to wheeled vehicles, it is not possible to enter or exit Yellowstone National Park through the Northeast Entrance. You must enter the park through Gardiner, Montana. Current road conditions are available through the [NPS Road Report at 307.344.2117](http://www.nps.gov/yell/roadreport).



POINT TO POINT DISTANCE	Miles/Kilometers
North Entrance to Mammoth Hot Springs	5 mi/8 km
Roosevelt to Northeast Entrance	29 mi/47 km
Roosevelt to Lamar Buffalo Ranch	11 mi/17 km
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

Lodging & Meals

Lodging

To inquire about availability at our [Yellowstone Keneda Overlook Field Campus](#), please contact us at 406-848-2400 extension 3.

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 Gardiner, MT-based 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 a few restaurants open in the wintertime. 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.



Fitness Levels

How fit do you need to be?

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 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. Good coordination is required.

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. Good coordination is required.

Level 5+: Be prepared for brisk aerobic snowshoeing or skiing *over* 12 miles per day with climbs *over* 1,500 feet; or steep, rugged, off-trail skiing or snowshoeing—including breaking trail in variable snow conditions. Good coordination is required.

All field activities will be conducted as a group. If you cannot meet the activity level expectations during your program, you 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.

To see the difficulty level and fitness expectations for a particular course, see that class' [course letter and registration page](#). We recommend you begin an exercise program right away if you have not already done so. 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.

Clothing & Equipment List

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 corresponding course letter. Additionally, Yellowstone Forever field staff assigned to your 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
- Sunglasses
- Lip protector, chapstick
- 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.

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 you 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.



YF Photo

Code of Ethics

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.



Code of Ethics

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.



Code of Ethics

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 Overview

Our Mission

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

We provide experiences and opportunities that create lasting connections to Yellowstone National Park, building a global community that is engaged and invested in the future of the world's first national park.

Our vision is that Yellowstone National Park endures forever.

Supporter Program & Retail Stores

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 online or at any of the locations in and around Yellowstone. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone.

Visit: shop.yellowstone.org

Membership Program

Yellowstone Forever members directly fund visitor education and park preservation.

Benefits include:

- 15% discount on merchandise at all Park Stores 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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What airport should I 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 do I 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 ext. 3 or institute@yellowstone.org

Q. Do I need to tip my instructor and/or staff?

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

Q. Can I rent equipment from YF?

A. YF does not have rental gear however there are locations in Bozeman, Gardiner, and Mammoth Hot Springs where gear can be reserved.