



Updated Summer 2023

Lamar Buffalo Ranch Winter General Information

Join us in Yellowstone National Park!

Join the Yellowstone Forever Institute for a Field Seminar in Lamar Valley, a truly special place to call home while in Yellowstone! If you are a newcomer to the Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits you during each day of exploration on your program. Yellowstone Forever will provide you with an enjoyable, high-quality, educational experience and a safe and memorable visit to Yellowstone National Park.



The following information is provided to help you prepare for your program. Please read it thoroughly and call us at [406-848-2400 ext. 3](tel:406-848-2400) or email institute@yellowstone.org, if you have any questions.

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

Table of Contents

The following document addresses:

What to Expect	Pg. 3
Facilities	Pg. 4
Lodging	Pg. 5
Meals	Pg. 6
Travel Information	Pg. 7
Program Preparation	Pg. 9
Code of Ethics	Pg. 11
Yellowstone Forever Overview	Pg. 15
Frequently Asked Questions	Pg. 16



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 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 payment includes lodging, tuition, meals, and transportation during your program. It does not include transportation to the park (new in 2022 there is a Bozeman airport shuttle available for an additional fee), park entrance fees, and instructor gratuities.

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



Facilities

Bunkhouse

The communal bunkhouse is open at all times and is the center of activity, where it houses two classrooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Make yourself at home in the bunkhouse by meeting new people, enjoying a midnight snack, and relaxing with classmates. The first classroom is used as a mudroom where coats and boots can be left by the door. Be sure to bring a pair of slippers or moccasins to wear in the bunkhouse. For more information on the kitchen, see Meals (page 6).



Please note that meals are not included for winter 23/24 programs unless otherwise noted.



Bathroom

The ranch has a shared heated bathhouse complete with men's and women's bathrooms and private showers. There are no bathrooms in the individual cabins. The bathhouse is nearby the cabins and has paper towels and hand soap for your convenience. You will be provided a code for the bathhouse door per your arrival to the ranch.

Students will need to bring their own toiletries and bath towels.

Lodging

Yellowstone Forever Institute students in Field Seminars stay in our rustic lodging at the historic Lamar Buffalo Ranch as part of their class fee. During winter 2023/24 all participants will stay in a Private Single Cabin (cabin to yourself) unless otherwise requested (folks traveling together).

Each log cabin has three single beds, chairs, propane heaters, and reading lamps. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, extra blankets if you like, a flashlight for getting around at night, and a non-electric alarm clock (cabins do not have outlets).

Stoves, lanterns, and candles cannot be used in or around the cabins, and smoking and food are not permitted in the cabins. Camping and pets (with the exception of service animals) are not allowed.

All lodging is available for check-in at 4:00 p.m. MST on the first evening and lodging check-out is at 9:00 a.m. MST on the final course date. On-site lodging is required for Lamar Buffalo Ranch courses, and dates are non-negotiable.



MEALS

Guests bring and prepare all their own food. The kitchen is a community area where everyone does their own cooking and cleans up after themselves. Meals should be kept simple since you will be preparing your meals in a shared cooking facility. It is equipped with gas stoves, a microwave, toaster, plates, silverware, cooking utensils, pots, and pans. Additionally, ranch staff supply spices, coffee, tea, sugar, and creamer.

Some courses include catering and are noted in the course letter. For classes that are catered, all meals during your program are provided; this includes:

- Dinner the first night after check-in/orientation
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the week
- Breakfast the morning of check-out

You are still encouraged to bring snacks and there will be a place for you to store them in the community kitchen. We can cater to most all food allergies/restrictions; please note them in your registration.



Directions

Directions to Lamar Buffalo Ranch

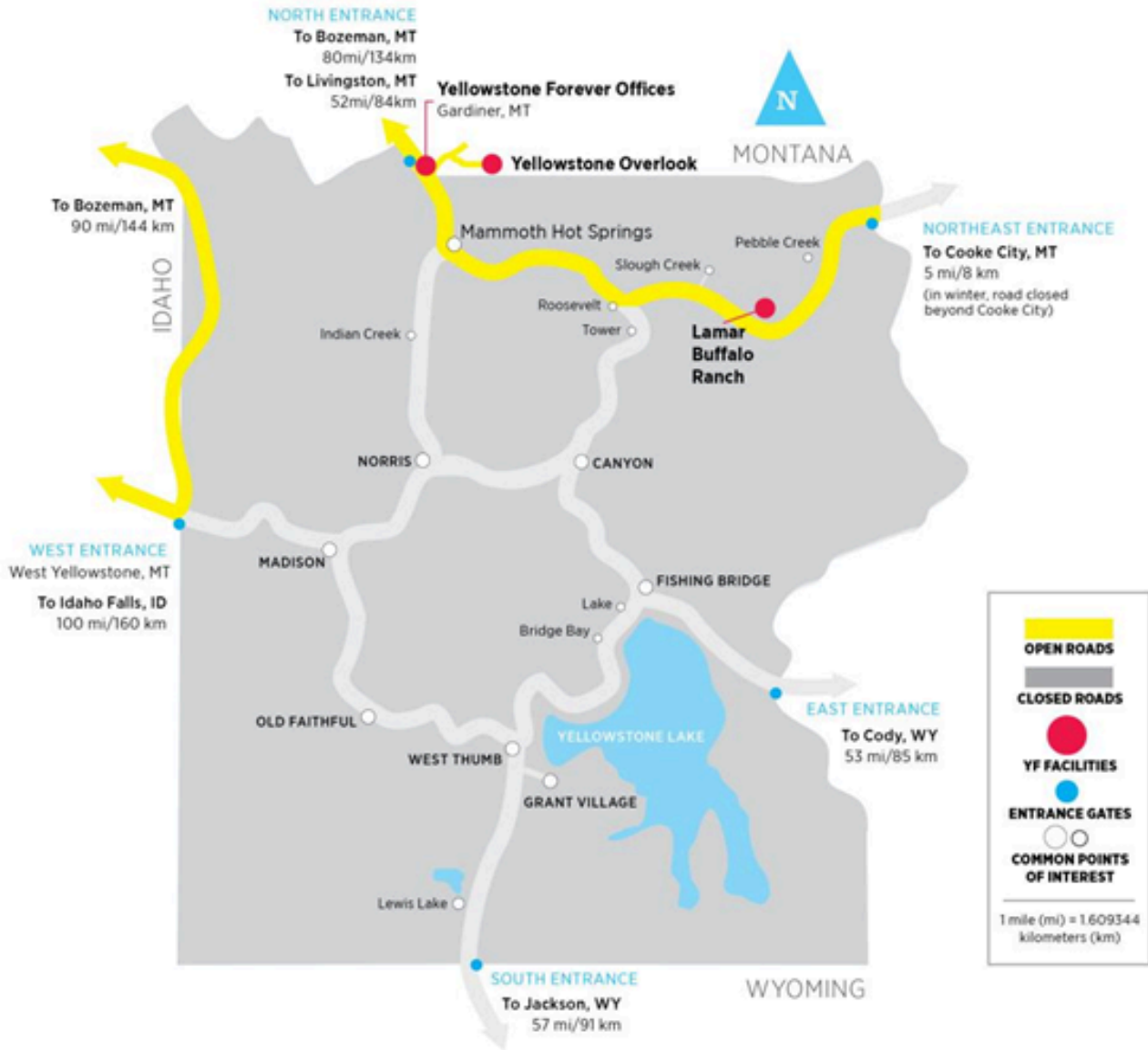
To access the Lamar Buffalo Ranch in winter there is only ONE entrance you can use to access the park. The ranch is approximately one hour from Gardiner, MT. To get to the ranch from Yellowstone Forever's office in Gardiner, MT (308 Park St, Gardiner MT 59030) see the directions below.

- Head south on US-89 through Gardiner for approximately 1 mile, headed towards the Roosevelt Arch.
- Before the Roosevelt Arch turn left onto S 3rd St. and take another left at the stop sign.
- Head to the North Entrance Yellowstone National Park entrance station. Once you have paid for your park permit, proceed into the park and drive 5.2 miles towards Mammoth Hot Springs.
- Once in Mammoth, turn left at the Tower Junction 3 way stop and travel 18.1 miles to Tower Junction.
- At Tower Junction turn left and travel 10.5 miles until you reach the Lamar Buffalo Ranch, where you will proceed to turn left and park.

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.

Park Map

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/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/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

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's 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
- Journal and 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.

The historic ranch runs on limited solar power with backup generators. For this reason, please do not bring electrical appliances such as radios, hairdryers, and crock pots as these items overload the system and can cause black-outs.

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.



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.



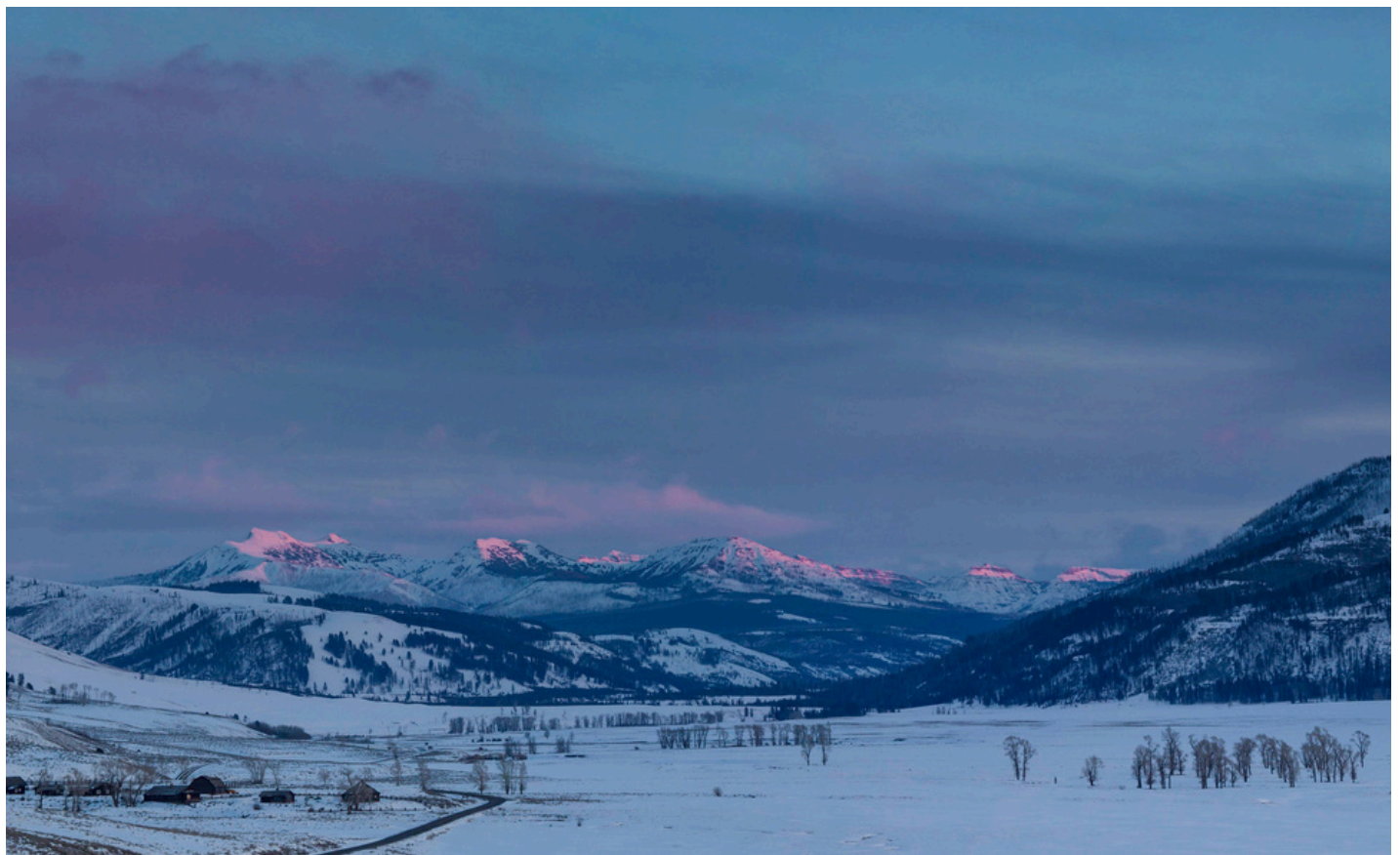
Code of Ethics

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 the [Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport](#) located in Bozeman, MT.

Q. Where can I park my car when on my Field Seminar?

A. There is a large, gravel parking lot at the ranch where you will be able to park your vehicle while attending your program.

Q. Is alcohol allowed at the ranch?

A. Yes, however it is BYOB and you must be 21+ years of age to consume.

Q. Are tents or trailers allowed at LBR?

A. No, all participants must stay in a designated cabin.

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 or institute@yellowstone.org

Q. What is an emergency number I can give family to reach me?

A. 406-641-2185

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is an instructor tip included in my program payment?

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

Q. Can I stay in Lamar lodging before or after the class?

A. Yes, only on a case-to-case basis. To inquire if there is availability, please contact YF at 406-848-2400 extension 3

Q. Does YF provide linens for the cabins?

A. For an additional cost of \$20, you can rent a sleeping bag and pillow from the ranch. If you don't plan on renting from us, make sure to bring your own linens.

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.

Q. Can CPAPS be accomodated?

A. In most cases, yes. Please reach out to YF directly for more information.