Lamar Buffalo Ranch
Summer General Information

YELLOWSTONE FOREVER
Join us in Yellowstone National Park!

Come 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 Yellowstone Forever Institute, you will be amazed at what awaits you during each 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 at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch. Please read it thoroughly and call us at 406.848.2400 or email contact@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 or www.nps.gov/yell

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PHOTO NPS/JACOB FRANK

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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 helping with your program. Program assistants receive professional training in Wilderness First Aid, emergency response and procedures, 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 lodging, tuition, and transportation during your program. It does not include transportation to the park, park entrance fees, and instructor gratuities.

For specific class details, including a day-to-day agenda, letter from the instructor, 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, kitchen, and 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 2).

Bathhouse
The ranch has a shared, heated bathhouse complete with men’s and women’s bathrooms and private showers. As there are no bathrooms in the individual cabins, the bathhouse is nearby the cabins and has paper towels and hand soap for 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 participants in Field Seminars stay in our rustic lodging at the historic Lamar Buffalo Ranch as part of their class fee. Participants will have a single bed in a Shared Cabin with up to two other participants. A Private Cabin for Two Participants (lodging with one other participant of your choice) and a Private Cabin for One Participant (cabin to yourself) have limited availability on a first-come, first-served basis.

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.

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

Camping and pets (with the exception of service animals) are not allowed.

MEALS

Unless the program includes catered meals (noted at registration and on course letters and confirmations), participants 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.

Please bring only what you will need during your stay as space in the kitchen and refrigerators is limited.

If your course is catered you will have the opportunity after registration to let staff know of any dietary restrictions you may have. We are able to accommodate all food restrictions and allergies. Gratuity for caterer is already included in the Field Seminar tuition; tipping is not necessary for caterers.

Catered classes include all dinners on the first night (check-in), breakfast through dinner on full days, and a continental breakfast on the last morning (check-out).
TRAVEL INFORMATION

Directions to the Lamar Buffalo Ranch

To get to the Lamar Buffalo Ranch in summer there are five different entrances you can use to access the park (note Dunraven Pass will be closed all of summer 2020). The ranch is approximately one hour away from Gardiner, Montana. To get to the ranch from the Yellowstone Forever office in Gardiner, 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 YNP pay station. Once you have paid for your entrance fee, proceed into the park and drive 5.2 miles towards Mammoth Hot Springs.
• Once in Mammoth, at the first stop sign you come to, turn left 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.
How fit do you need to be?

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

**LEVEL 1:** Be prepared to hike up to 1 mile per day, comfortably, through relatively flat terrain on maintained trails.

**LEVEL 2:** Be prepared to hike up to 3 miles per day, comfortably, with elevation gains up to 600 feet. Some off-trail hiking is possible.

**LEVEL 3:** Be prepared to hike up to 5 miles per day, comfortably, with occasional elevation gains up to 1,000 feet in undulating terrain.

**LEVEL 4:** Be prepared to hike up to 8 miles per day at a brisk pace, comfortably, with climbs up to 1,500 feet on dirt trails. Loose rocks, uneven footing, and off-trail hiking are possible. Good coordination is recommended.

**LEVEL 5:** Be prepared for brisk aerobic, destination-oriented hiking up to 12 miles a day. You should be physically conditioned to do these hikes comfortably. Elevation changes up to 2,000 feet on dirt trails or off-trail. Loose rock, uneven footing, steep hillside traverses, and stream crossings are possible. 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 program’s course letter and registration webpage. 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, please visit [www.yellowstone.org/experience/health-information/](http://www.yellowstone.org/experience/health-information/)
GENERAL CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT 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 be carrying a first aid kit, bear spray, and emergency communication device.

Equipment
- Day Pack – *Enough capacity to carry extra clothes, water, lunch, camera, binoculars, field guides, etc.*
- Water Bottle – *One-quart minimum.*
- Sunglasses/Sunscreen/Lip Protector – *Sun at high altitude can burn unprotected skin quickly.*
- Optics – *Camera, binoculars, and scopes, if wanted. Yellowstone Forever does provide optics for all programs.*
- Notebook/Pencil
- Flashlight/Headlamp – *For walking to and from your cabin in the evenings and mornings.*
- Alarm – *Nothing that needs to be plugged in.*
- Calling Card – *There is no cell phone reception or internet service in the Lamar Valley.*
- Toiletries/Towel
- Food/Snacks – *Shared kitchen; see Meals (page 2) for more information.*

Clothing
- Insulating Underwear – *Capilene, polypropylene, or similar wicking fabric.*
- Mid-Weight Insulating Layer – *Light, 200-weight synthetic fleece or wool shirt/pullover.*
- Heavyweight Insulating Layer – *Wool, down, heavyweight fleece, or other synthetic fabric.*
- Waterproof & Windproof Outer Layer – *Lightweight and breathable. Both jackets and pants.*
- Short-Sleeved Shirt – *Synthetic wicking shirts are ideal.*
- Pants – *Wool, fleece, or tights. Jeans are not recommended.*
- Hats – *Both a brimmed sun hat and an insulating hat that covers your ears for cold weather.*
- Waterproof/Windproof Gloves – *Lightweight glove liners and wool/fleece gloves or mittens.*
- Socks – *Light wool or synthetic liner sock with heavier wool or synthetic outer sock.*
- Insulated Boots – *Water-repellent layers outside, thick insulation inside, and fit over thick socks.*
- Off-Duty Shoes – *Sandals, athletic shoes, or other leisure footwear.*

The historic ranch runs on limited solar power with backup generators. For this reason, please do not bring electrical appliances such as radios, hair dryers, and crock pots as these items overload the system and can cause blackouts.
CANCELLATION POLICY

PLEASE READ THIS POLICY BEFORE REGISTERING FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Once you register for a program, your registration is subject to the following cancellation policy.

If you cancel:

- **90 days or more** prior to the start of your program, 100% of your payment will be refunded minus a $50 per person processing fee.
- **60 days or more** prior to the start of your program, 50% of your payment will be refunded minus a $50 per person processing fee.
- **30 days or more** prior to the start of your program, 25% of your payment will be refunded minus a $50 per person processing fee.

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

To guard against unexpected circumstances, we strongly advise you to purchase 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 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 (cont.)

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.

PHOTOS MARIA BISSO, NPS/JACOB FRANK
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What airport should I fly into?
A. Commercial airlines serve the following airports near Yellowstone National Park all year: Cody and Jackson, Wyoming; Bozeman and Billings, Montana; and Idaho Falls, Idaho. The West Yellowstone, Montana, airport is serviced from early May to mid-October from Salt Lake City, Utah.

Q. Does Yellowstone Forever offer a shuttle service?
A. Yellowstone Forever does not currently have a shuttle service available, except for Lamar Premier Packages.

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 the Lamar Buffalo Ranch?
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 shall be directed to the instructor, who will reach out to you first. For general questions please call or email the Contact Center at 406.848.2400 or contact@yellowstone.org.

Q. Do I need to tip my instructor and/or the Lamar Buffalo Ranch staff?
A. Gratuity is not included in price of program. If you wish to tip, you are welcome to do so, however it is not required.

Q. What kind of food should I bring for non-catered programs?
A. The kitchen has everything needed to make any basic meal. Breakfasts and dinners typically take place at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch and participants are able to cook full meals, however remember you are sharing refrigerator space and will have a large plastic tub (of your own) to put non-perishable items in. For many of the programs, plan on bringing sack lunch items, which do not need to be heated, for lunch in the field.

Q. Does Yellowstone Forever provide linens for the cabins?
A. We do not. Please bring your own, except for Lamar Premier Packages for which they are provided.

Q. Can I rent equipment from Yellowstone Forever?
A. Yellowstone Forever does not have rental gear however there are locations in Bozeman, Gardiner, and Mammoth Hot Springs where gear can be reserved.

Q. Can dietary restrictions be accommodated for catered classes?
A. Yes, after registering for your course please reach out to us to provide that information and we will pass that on to our caterer.

Q. Can CPAPS be accommodated?
A. In most cases, yes. Please reach out to Yellowstone Forever directly for more information.

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. What is an emergency number I can give family to reach me?
A. 307.344.8826

Q. Can my spouse/partner stay with me and not take the class?
A. No, all participants must register in the class if they are utilizing lodging at the ranch.
Yellowstone Forever is the official nonprofit partner of Yellowstone National Park.

We partner with Yellowstone National Park to create opportunities for all people to experience, enhance, and preserve Yellowstone forever.

Supporter Program & Retail Stores

Yellowstone Forever supporters directly fund priority park programs and projects. Supporters also provide scholarships for teachers and help expand programming for underserved youth. Benefits include a subscription to our magazine Yellowstone Quarterly, early registration and discounts for Yellowstone Forever Institute programs, and discounts on retail purchases throughout Yellowstone (exclusions apply). If you are not yet a supporter of Yellowstone Forever, an introductory subscription (one year) to our magazine Yellowstone Quarterly is included with your tuition. For more information, visit: Yellowstone.org/donate

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 percent discount on merchandise online or at any of our 11 locations in and around the park. Proceeds directly support Yellowstone. To make purchases, visit: shop.yellowstone.org